PETER B. GILLIS
GORDON PURCELL
7
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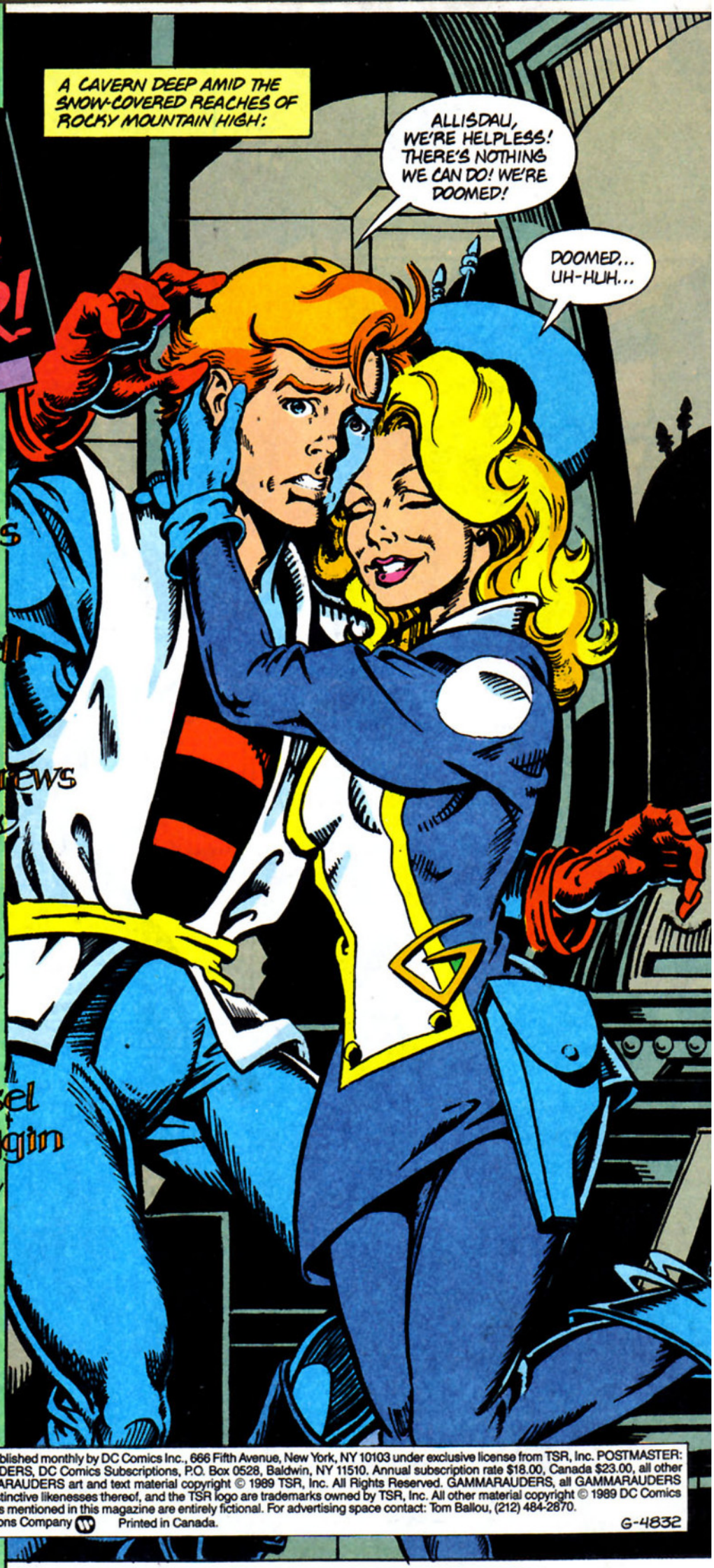
GAMMARAUDERS
EXCALIBURNED!
THE ROSEBUD RUMBLE
PART 3 OF 4

RING around the COLLAR!



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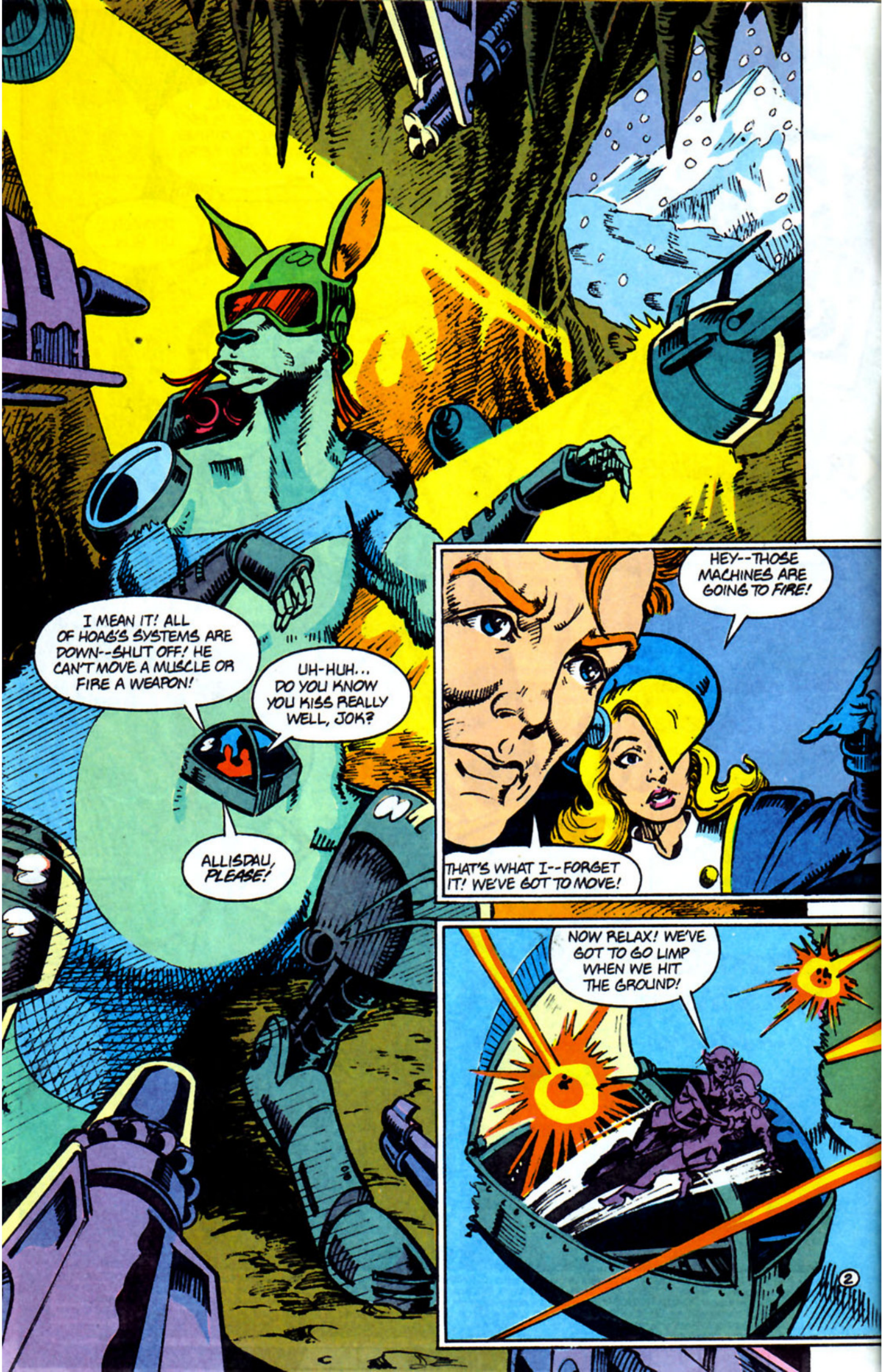
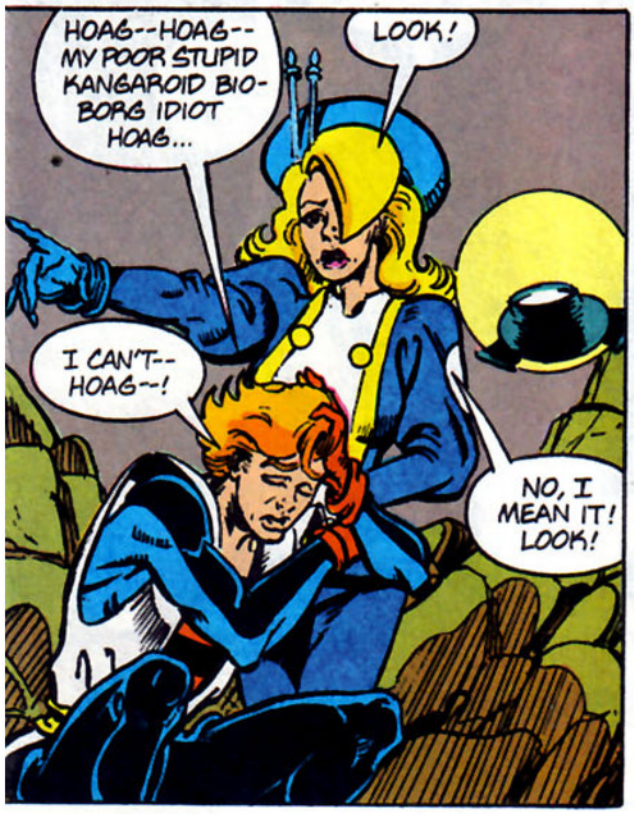
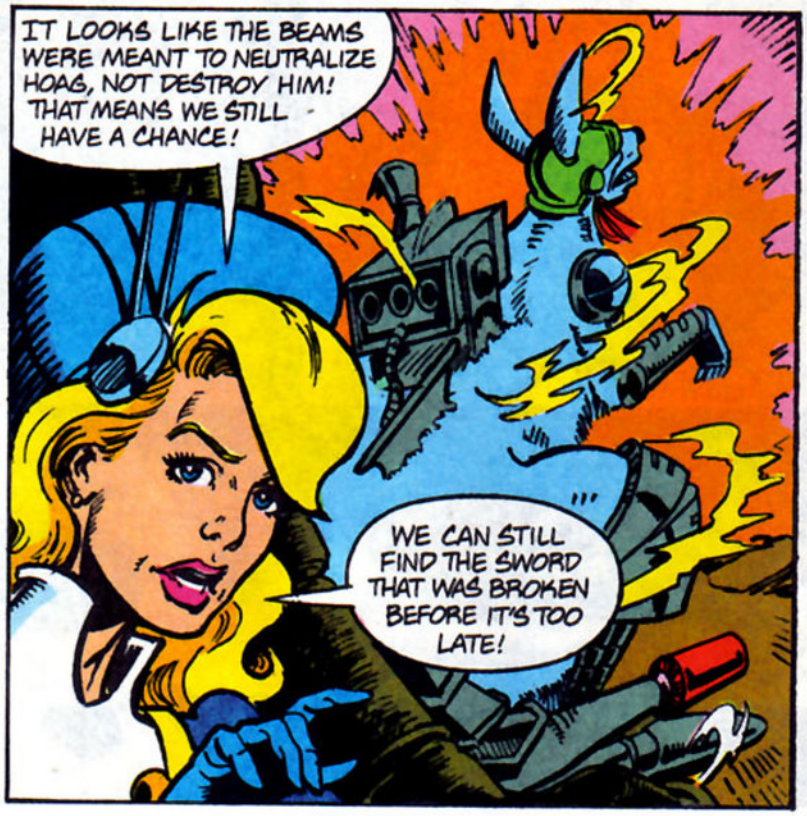
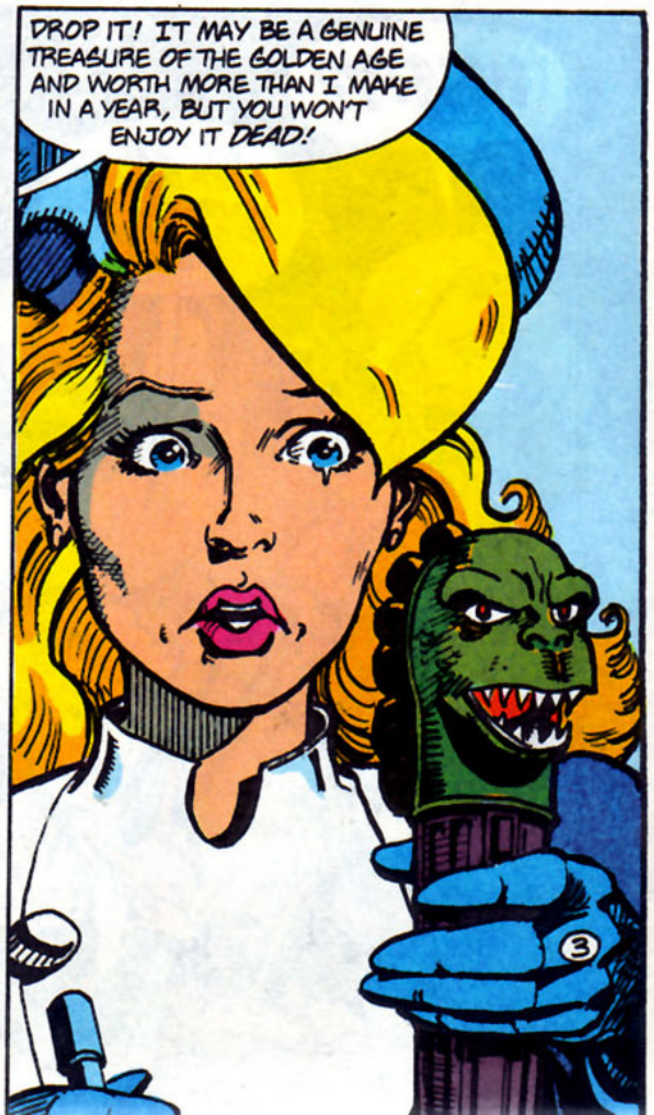

I MEAN IT! ALL OF HOAG'S SYSTEMS ARE DOWN--SHUT OFF! HE CAN'T MOVE A MUSCLE OR FIRE A WEAPON!
UH-HUH... DO YOU KNOW YOU KISS REALLY WELL, JOK?
ALLISDAU, PLEASE!
HEY--THOSE MACHINES ARE GOING TO FIRE!
THAT'S WHAT I--FORGET IT! WE'VE GOT TO MOVE!
NOW RELAX! WE'VE GOT TO GO LIMP WHEN WE HIT THE GROUND!
2

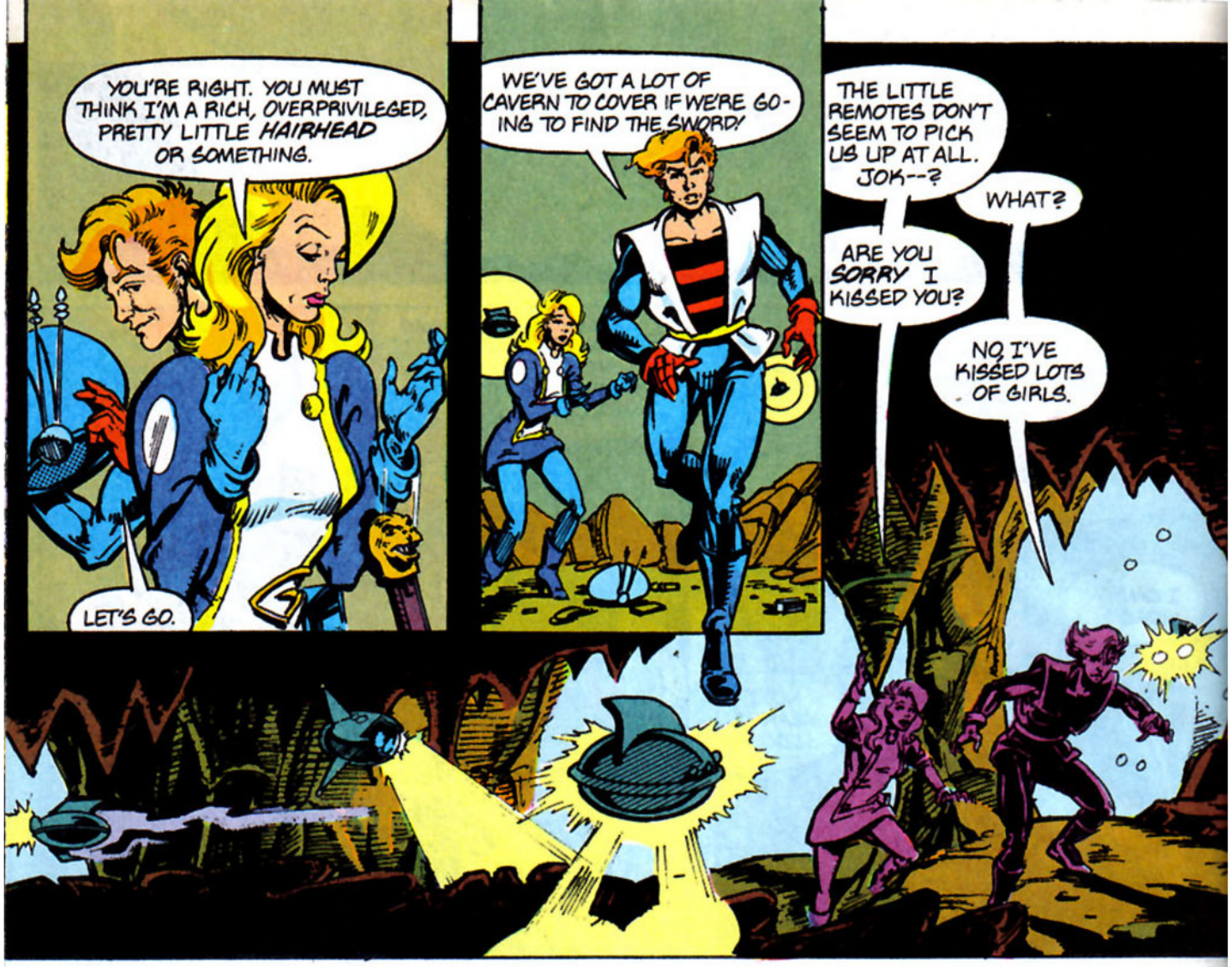
NOW RUN! RUN!

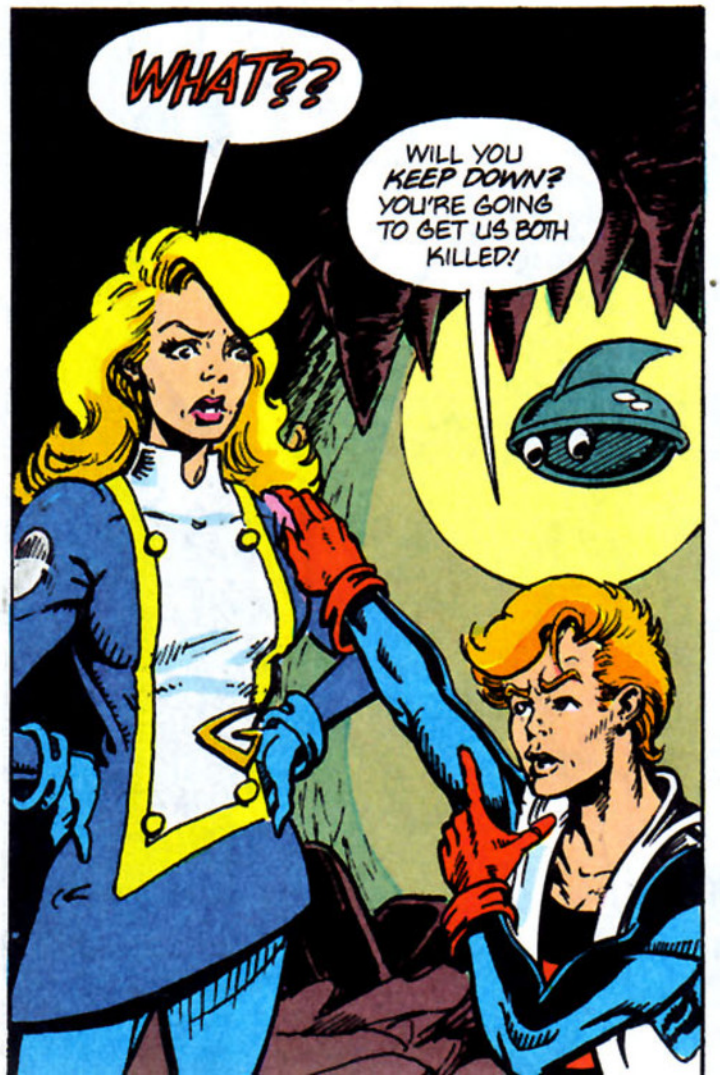

HOAG--HOAG--MY POOR STUPID KANGAROID BIO-BORG IDIOT HOAG...
LOOK!
I CAN'T--HOAG--!
NO, I MEAN IT! LOOK!

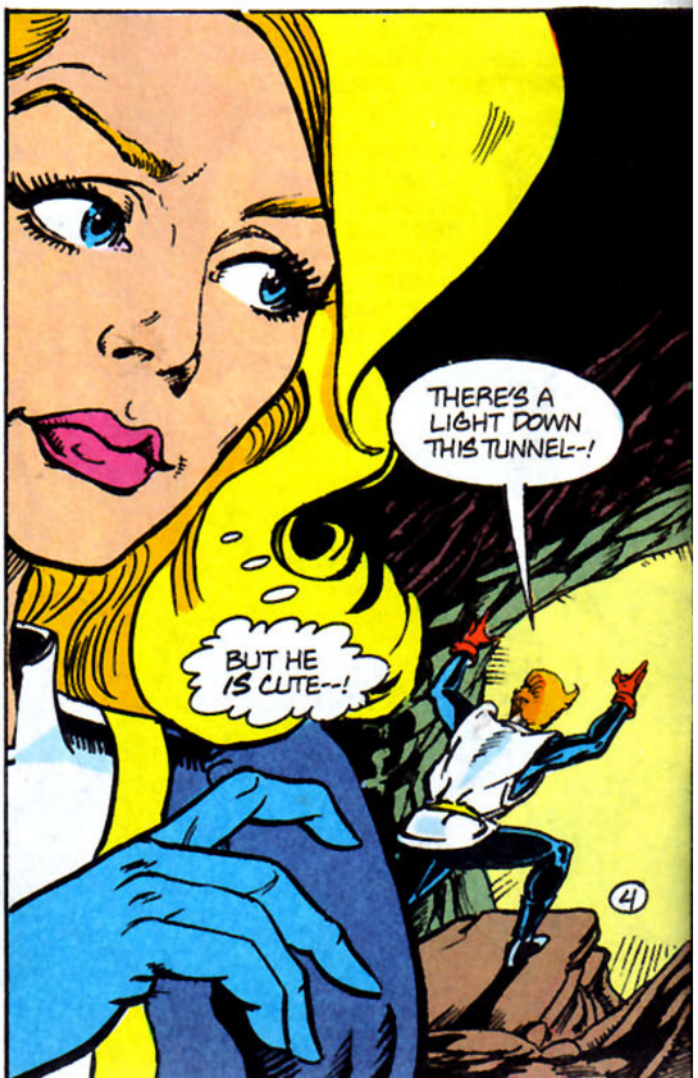

IT LOOKS LIKE THE BEAMS WERE MEANT TO NEUTRALIZE HOAG, NOT DESTROY HIM! THAT MEANS WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE!
WE CAN STILL FIND THE SWORD THAT WAS BROKEN BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

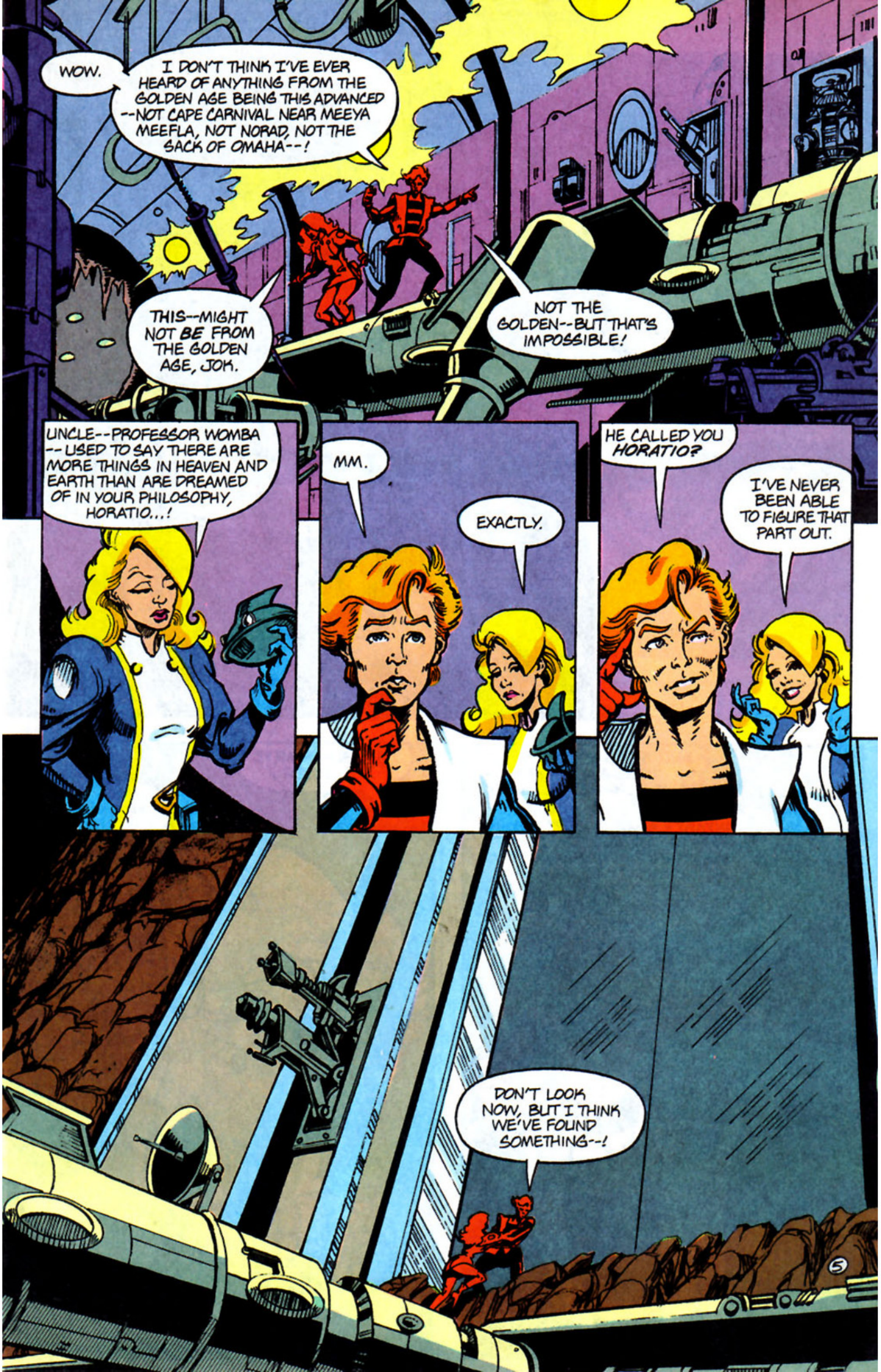
YOU HAVE A POINT! IN WHICH CASE WE'D BETTER MAKE SURE THE BEAMS DON'T GET US, EITHER!
IF THEY HAVEN'T LOCKED ON US IMMEDIATELY, MY BEST GUESS IS THAT THEY FOCUS ON METAL! DUMP EVERYTHING METAL YOU HAVE!
OK!

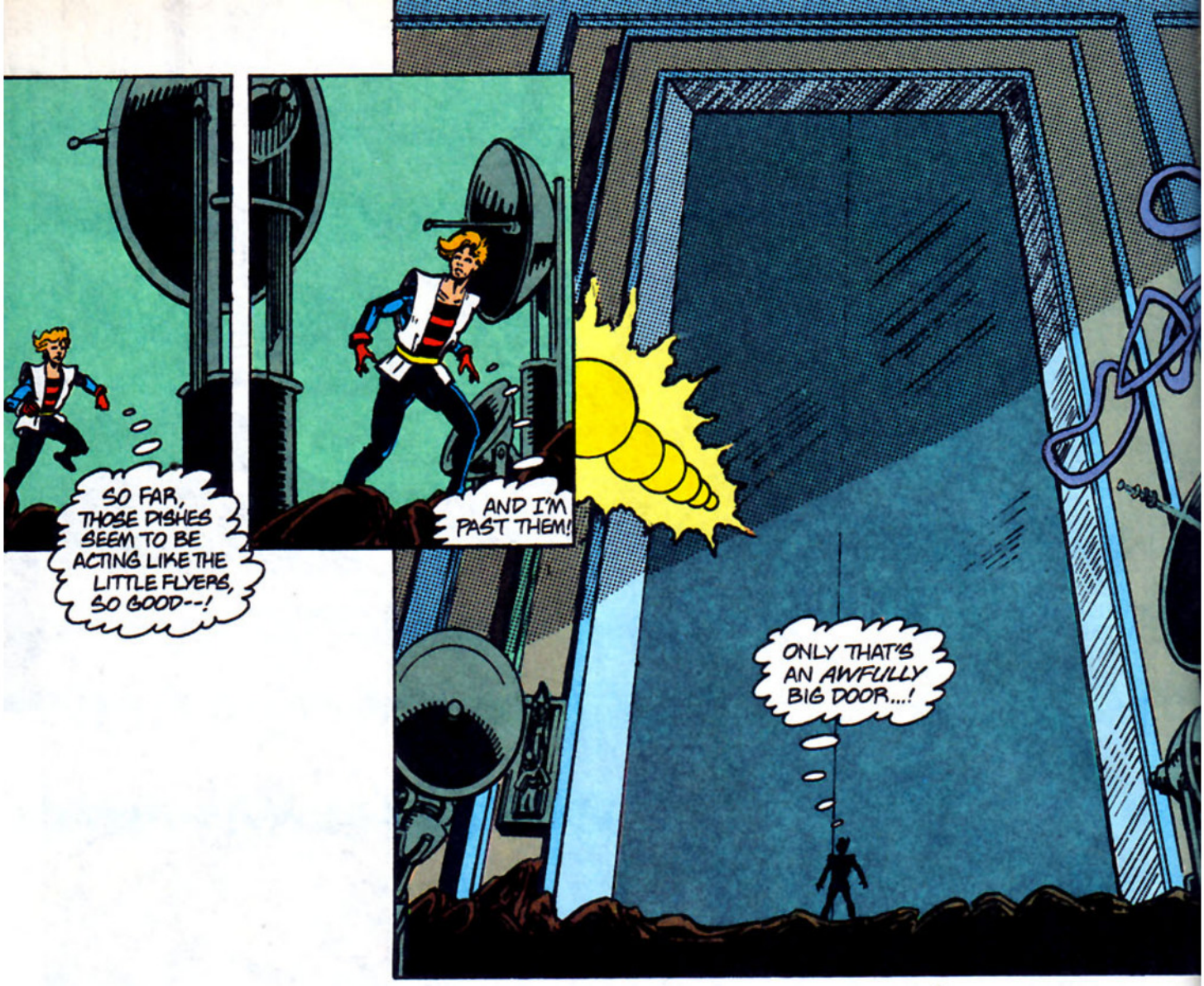

DROP IT! IT MAY BE A GENUINE TREASURE OF THE GOLDEN AGE AND WORTH MORE THAN I MAKE IN A YEAR, BUT YOU WON'T ENJOY IT DEAD!

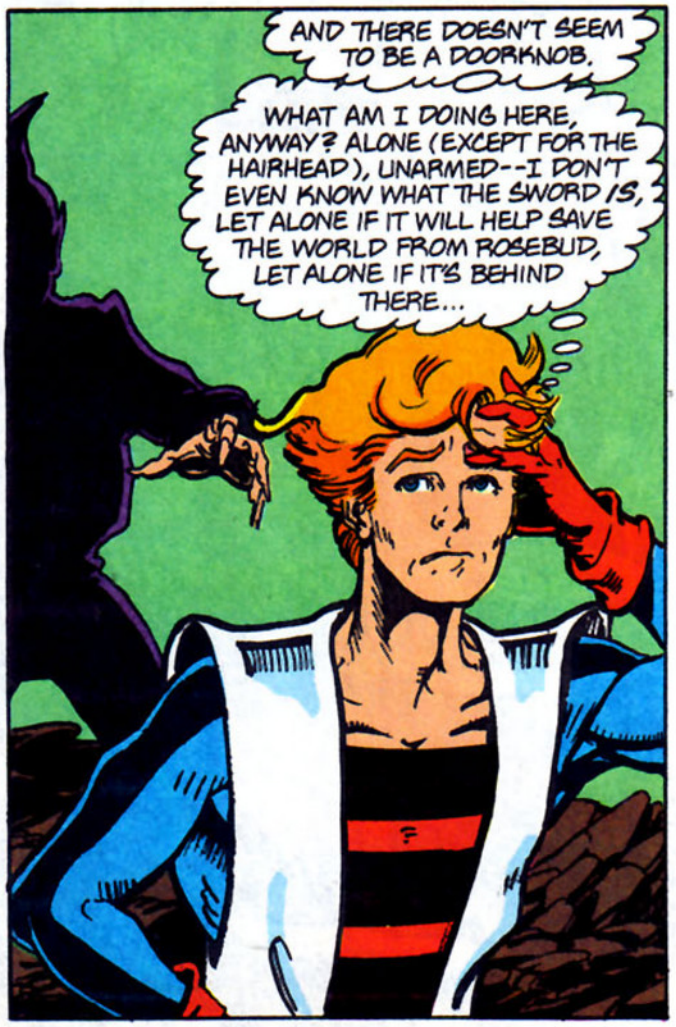

YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU MUST THINK I'M A RICH, OVERPRIVILEGED, PRETTY LITTLE HAIRHEAD OR SOMETHING.
LET'S GO.
WE'VE GOT A LOT OF CAVERN TO COVER IF WE'RE GOING TO FIND THE SWORD!
THE LITTLE REMOTES DON'T SEEM TO PICK US UP AT ALL. JOK--?
WHAT?
ARE YOU SORRY I KISSED YOU?
NO, I'VE KISSED LOTS OF GIRLS.

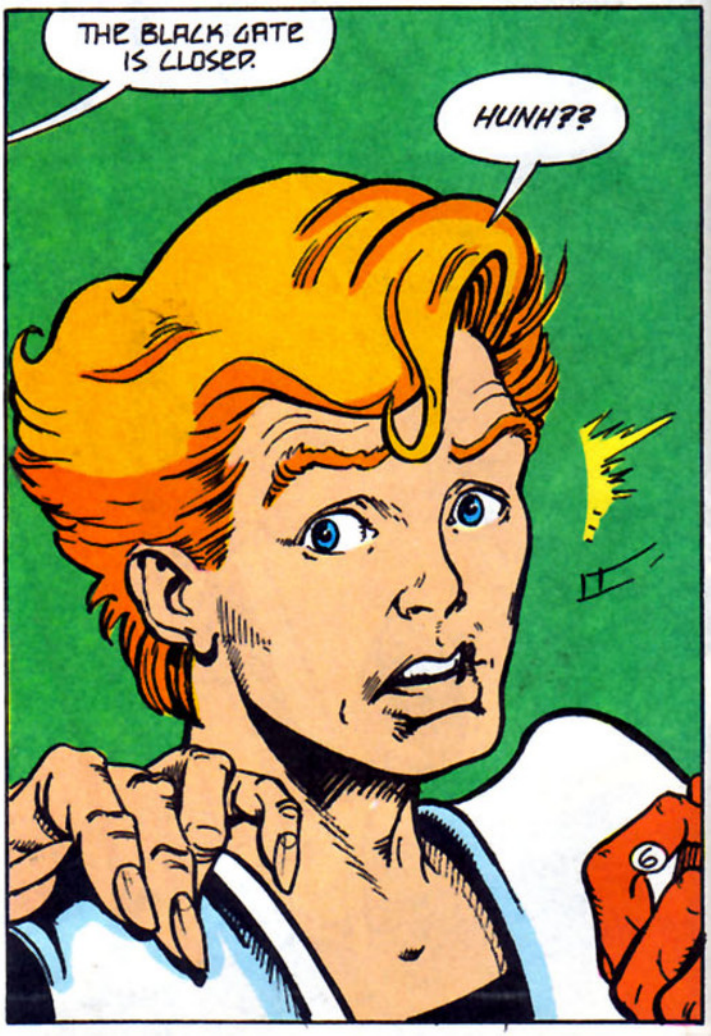

WHAT??
WILL YOU KEEP DOWN? YOU'RE GOING TO GET US BOTH KILLED!


THERE'S A LIGHT DOWN THIS TUNNEL--!
BUT HE IS CUTE--!
4


WOW.
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HEARD OF ANYTHING FROM THE GOLDEN AGE BEING THIS ADVANCED --NOT CAPE CARNIVAL NEAR MEEYA MEEFLA, NOT NORAD, NOT THE SACK OF OMAHA--!
THIS--MIGHT NOT BE FROM THE GOLDEN AGE, JOK.
NOT THE GOLDEN--BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
UNCLE--PROFESSOR WOMBA --USED TO SAY THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH THAN ARE DREAMED OF IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY, HORATIO...!
MM.
EXACTLY.
HE CALLED YOU HORATIO?
I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE THAT PART OUT.
DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT I THINK WE'VE FOUND SOMETHING--!

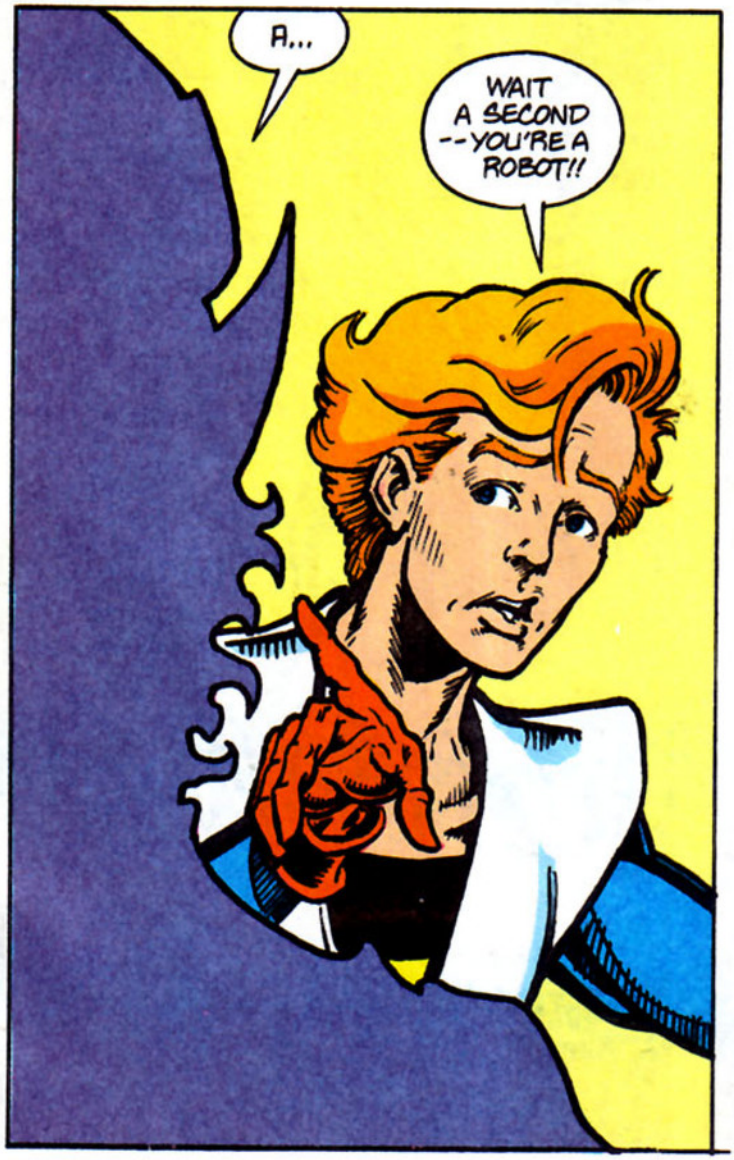

SO FAR, THOSE DISHES SEEM TO BE ACTING LIKE THE LITTLE FLYERS, SO GOOD--!
AND I'M PAST THEM!
ONLY THAT'S AN *AWFULLY* BIG DOOR...!


AND THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A DOORKNOB.
WHAT AM I DOING HERE, ANYWAY? ALONE (EXCEPT FOR THE HAIRHEAD), UNARMED--I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE SWORD *IS*, LET ALONE IF IT WILL HELP SAVE THE WORLD FROM ROSEBUD, LET ALONE IF IT'S BEHIND THERE...

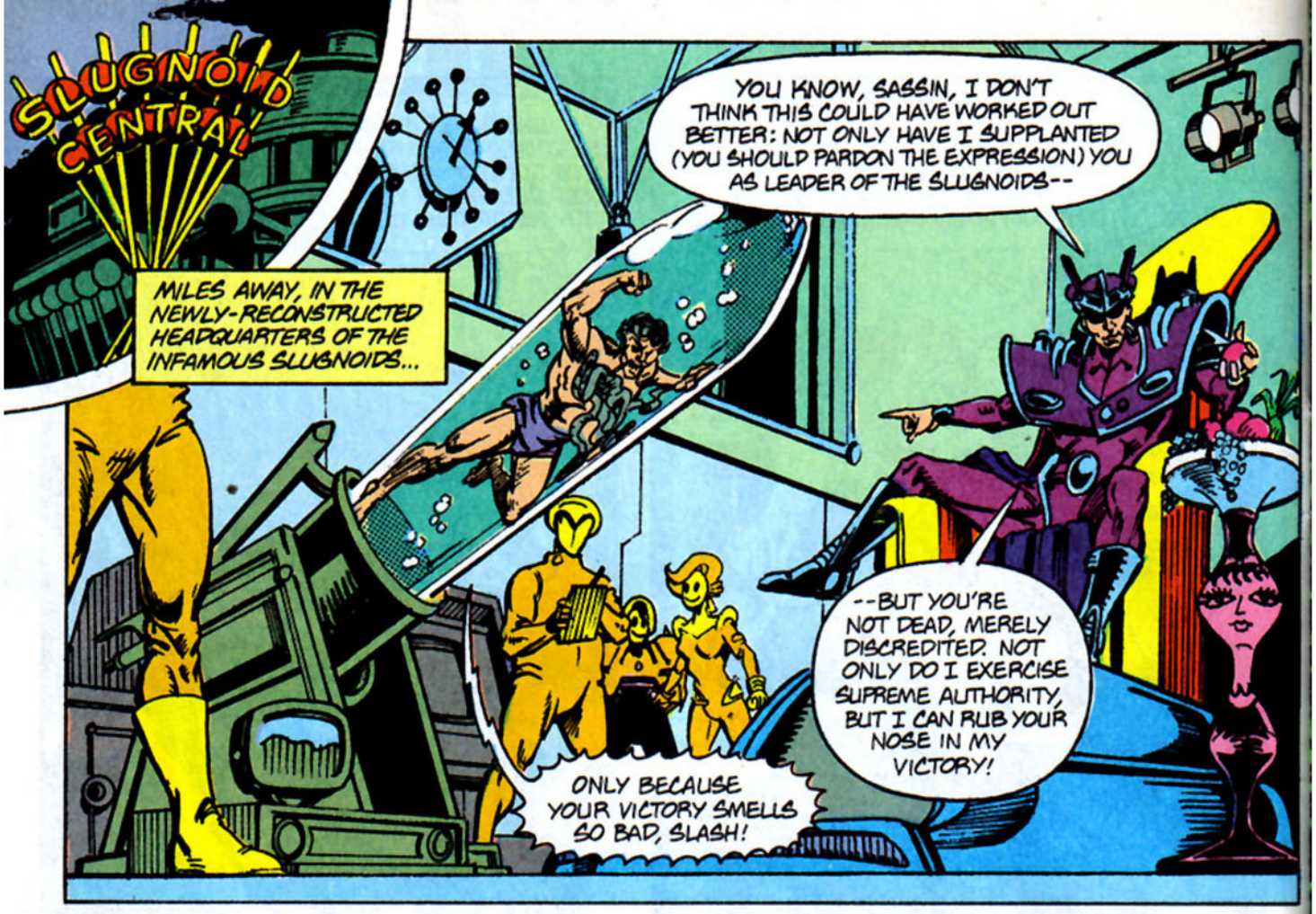

THE BLACK GATE IS CLOSED.
HUNH??

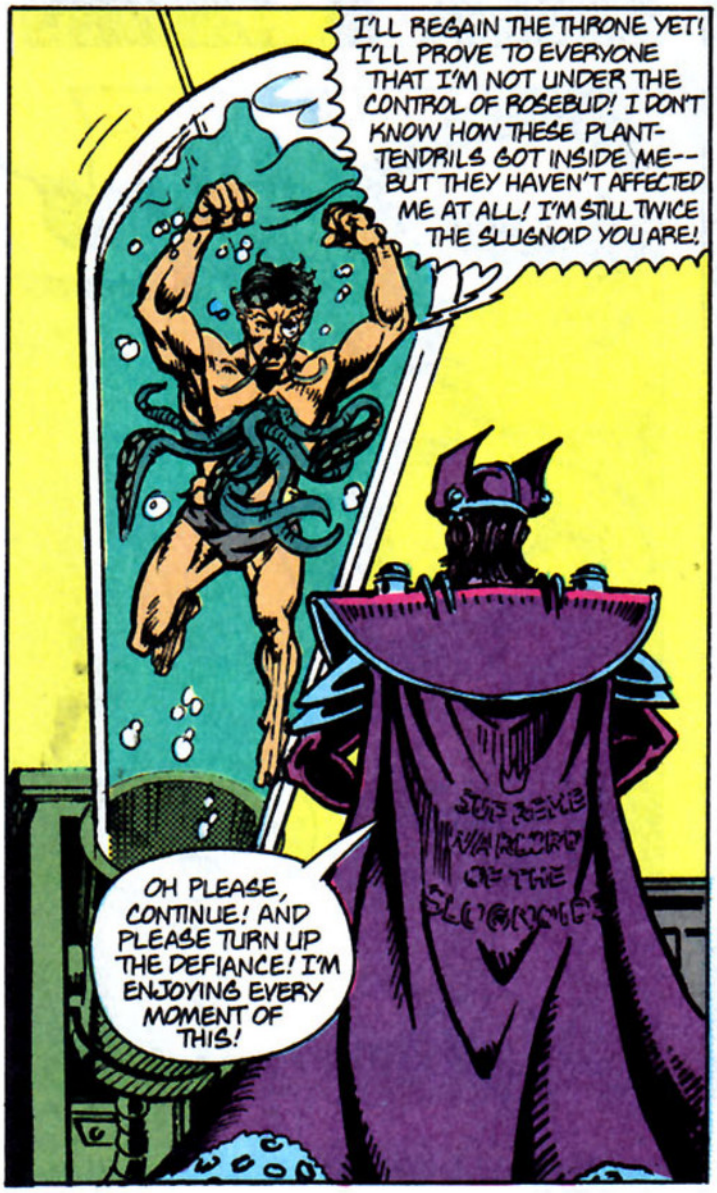
SEEK FOR THE SWORD THAT WAS BROKEN IN IMLADRIS IT DWELLS THERE SHALL BE WAH DE DOO DAH DUM DUM DUM MORGULSPELLS...
WHAT-- WHO ARE YOU?

WHO AM I? A GOOD QUESTION, YOUNG LAD. A VERY GOOD QUESTION. A VERY, VERY GOOD QUESTION. A VERY, VERY, VERY GOOD QUESTION...


A...
WAIT A SECOND --YOU'RE A ROBOT!!

I THINK I'LL CALL YOU WART--!


SLUGNOID CENTRAL
MILES AWAY, IN THE NEWLY-RECONSTRUCTED HEADQUARTERS OF THE INFAMOUS SLUGNOIDS...
YOU KNOW, SASSIN, I DON'T THINK THIS COULD HAVE WORKED OUT BETTER: NOT ONLY HAVE I SUPPLANTED (YOU SHOULD PARDON THE EXPRESSION) YOU AS LEADER OF THE SLUGNOIDS--
--BUT YOU'RE NOT DEAD, MERELY DISCREDITED. NOT ONLY DO I EXERCISE SUPREME AUTHORITY, BUT I CAN RUB YOUR NOSE IN MY VICTORY!
ONLY BECAUSE YOUR VICTORY SMELLS SO BAD, SLASH!

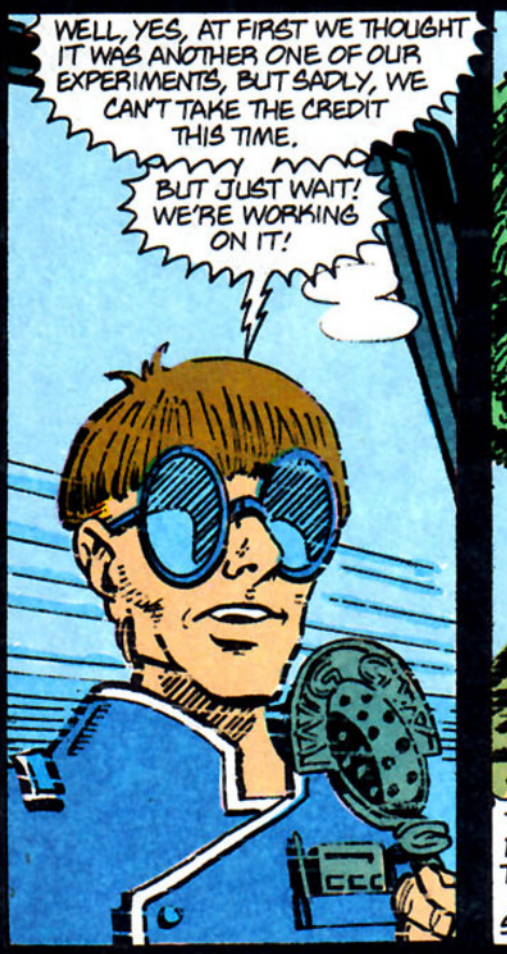

I'LL REGAIN THE THRONE YET! I'LL PROVE TO EVERYONE THAT I'M NOT UNDER THE CONTROL OF ROSEBUD! I DON'T KNOW HOW THESE PLANT-TENDRILS GOT INSIDE ME-- BUT THEY HAVEN'T AFFECTED ME AT ALL! I'M STILL TWICE THE SLUGNOID YOU ARE!
OH PLEASE, CONTINUE! AND PLEASE TURN UP THE DEFIANCE! I'M ENJOYING EVERY MOMENT OF THIS!

WARLORD SLASH! THERE'S SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES YOUR ATTENTION! PLEASE COME WITH ME!
OH, VERY WELL! BUT YOU INTERRUPTED THE CRESCENDO!

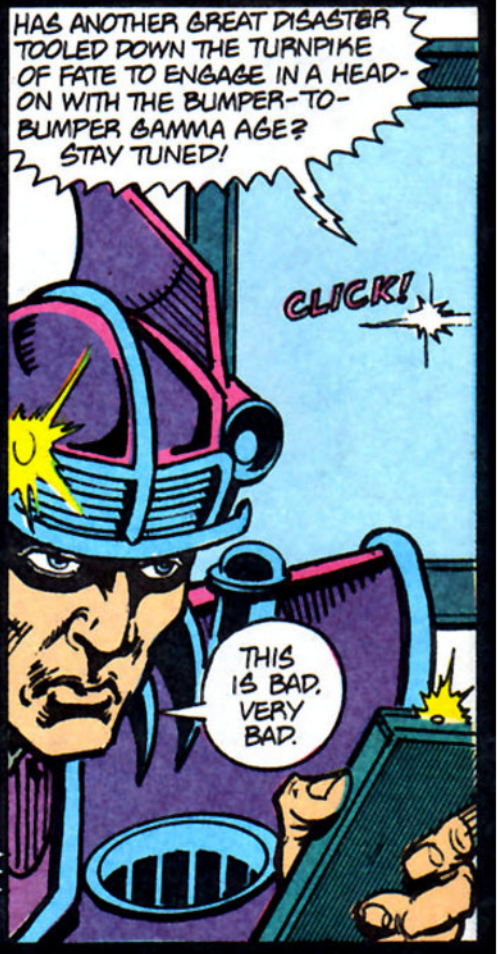
THIS HAD BETTER BE GOOD!
OH VERY, SIRE!

THE ROYAL REMOTE CONTROL, MY LORD--!
YES--!

LET THE SITUATION BE REVEALED--!
AN ENTIRE FORTRESS OF THE LAB RATS WAS DESTROYED TODAY BY A MAMMOTH UPHEAVAL, SIMILAR TO OTHER INCIDENTS REPORTED AROUND THE BIG NADA!

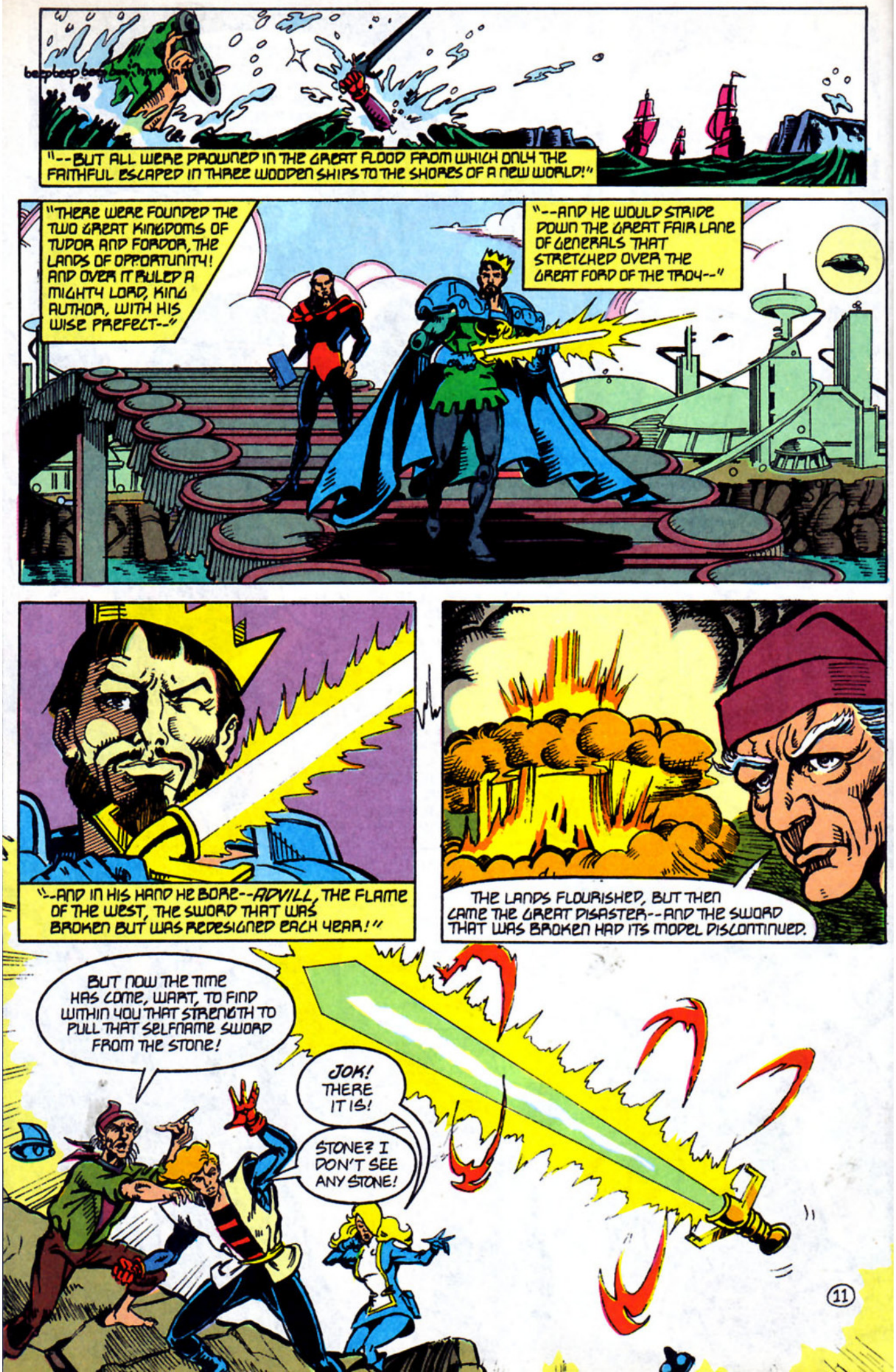

WELL, YES, AT FIRST WE THOUGHT IT WAS ANOTHER ONE OF OUR EXPERIMENTS, BUT SADLY, WE CAN'T TAKE THE CREDIT THIS TIME.
BUT JUST WAIT! WE'RE WORKING ON IT!

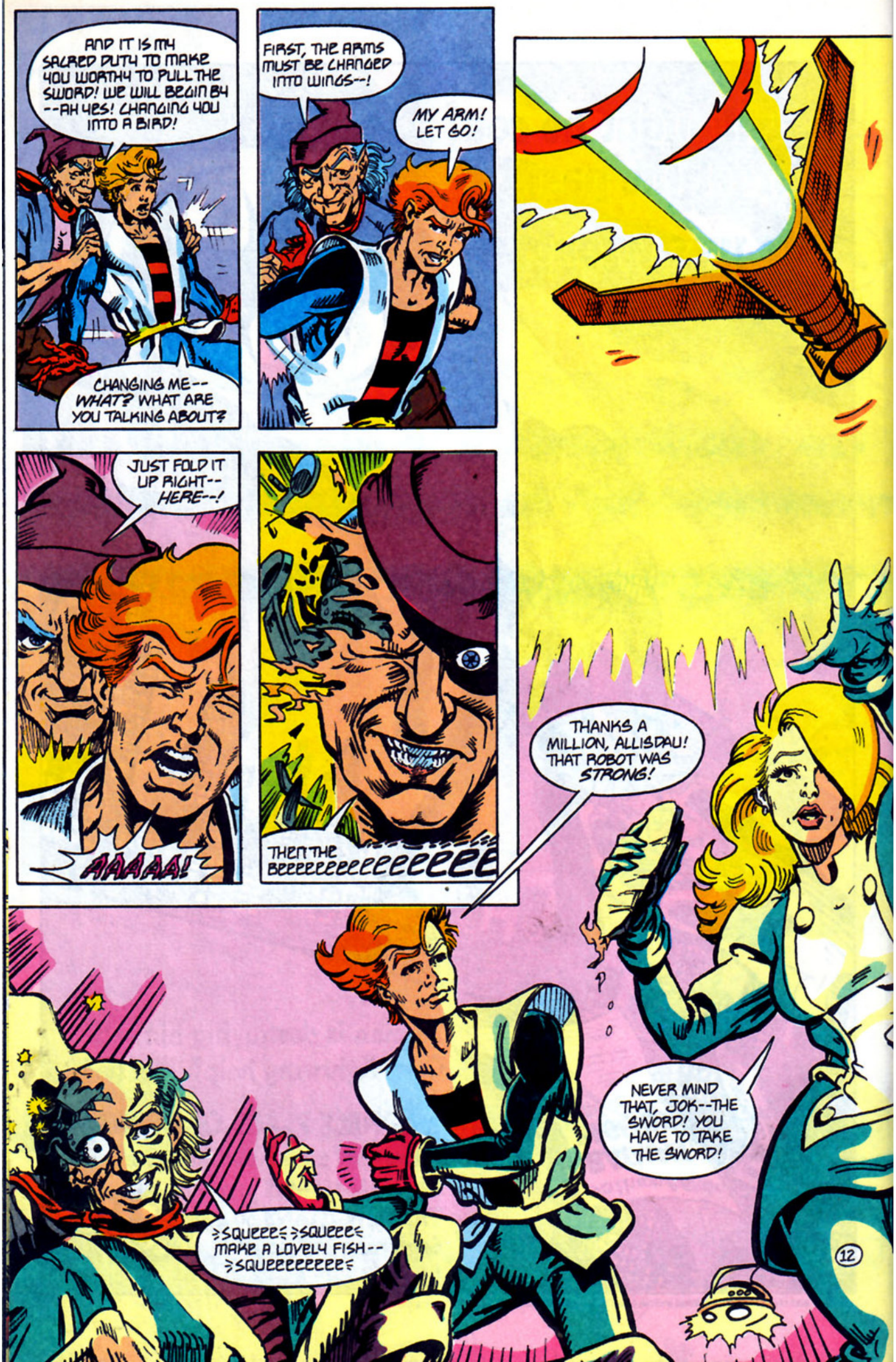
BUT WHAT HAS DISTURBED MANY IS THAT THE THING RESPONSIBLE HAS TAKEN THE TREELIKE SHAPE OF THE AWESOME MUSHROOM CLOUD THAT SOME SAY DESTROYED THE GOLDEN AGE!


HAS ANOTHER GREAT DISASTER TOOLED DOWN THE TURNPIKE OF FATE TO ENGAGE IN A HEAD-ON WITH THE BUMPER-TO-BUMPER GAMMA AGE? STAY TUNED!
CLICK!
THIS IS BAD. VERY BAD.

SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE-- BUT WHAT?
HAS ALL MY CUNNING-- MY CLEVERNESS DESERTED ME NOW THAT I'VE BECOME MANAGEMENT?
I'VE GOT TO THINK!

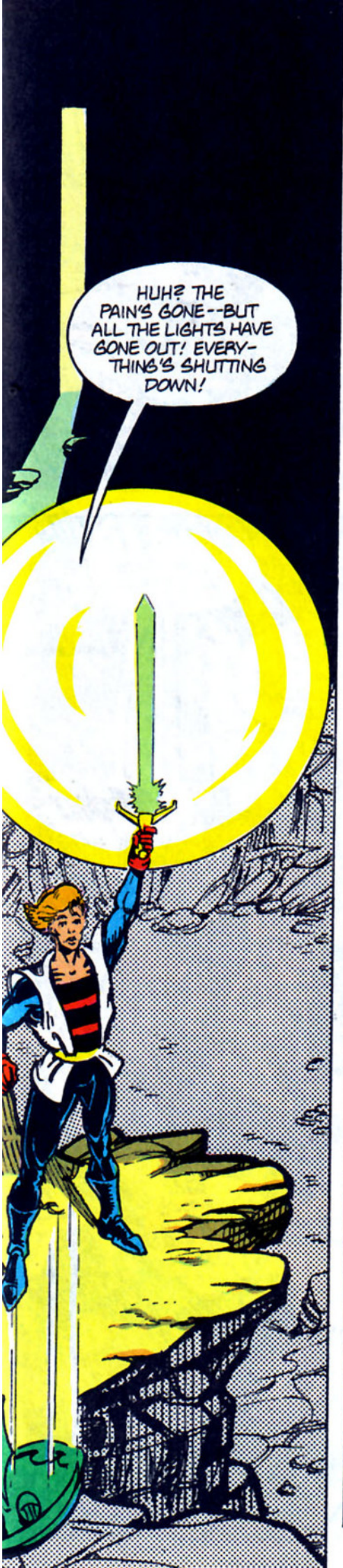
NOW, WART, YOU MAY ENTER THE CHAMBER OF ANCIENT SECRETS--BUT AS YOU DO, I MUST REVEAL UNTO YOU THE TRUE STORY OF THE LONG-FORGOTTEN GOLDEN AGE!
DO YOU HAVE TO?
OF COURSE! FOR ONLY THEN CAN YOU KNOW THE FULL IMPORT OF WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO DO!
MY LAD, AGES AGO, WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WALKED THE EARTH AND GIANTS WERE IN FLOWER, TWO GREAT FORCES AROSE: AND THEY WERE CALLED THE MONTAGUES AND THE CAPPULLINOS!
YOU COULD HELP--!
UH UH!
ONE OF THESE GREAT SIDES WAS THE DARKER, AND ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH THE FORCES OF CHAOS--WHILE THE OTHER SIDE ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH THE FORCES OF CONTROL!
THERE WAS GREAT WAR BETWEEN THEM--AND ON THE BRIGHT SIDE WAS A GREAT HERO WHO WORE GREAT BOOTS THROUGH WHICH HE COULD TALK FOR SEVEN LEAGUES AND MORE--
--WHILE THE CHAMPION OF THE DARK SIDE WAS A PALE WHITE DEMON WITH A BLACK SWORD THAT DRANK THE SOULS OF MEN! GREAT INDEED THEY WERE--
10

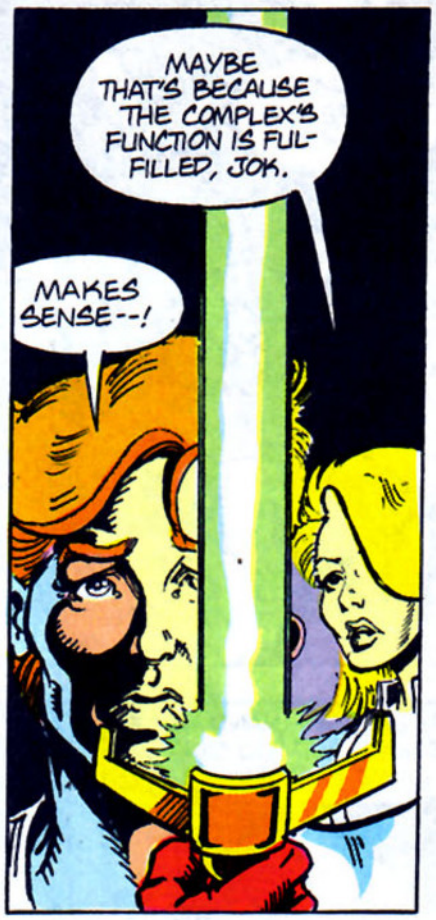

beepbeep beep
"--BUT ALL WERE DROWNED IN THE GREAT FLOOD FROM WHICH ONLY THE FAITHFUL ESCAPED IN THREE WOODEN SHIPS TO THE SHORES OF A NEW WORLD!"
"THERE WERE FOUNDED THE TWO GREAT KINGDOMS OF TUDOR AND FORDOR, THE LANDS OF OPPORTUNITY! AND OVER IT RULED A MIGHTY LORD, KING AUTHOR, WITH HIS WISE PREFECT--"
"--AND HE WOULD STRIDE DOWN THE GREAT FAIR LANE OF GENERALS THAT STRETCHED OVER THE GREAT FORD OF THE TROY--"
"--AND IN HIS HAND HE BORE--ADVILL, THE FLAME OF THE WEST, THE SWORD THAT WAS BROKEN BUT WAS REDESIGNED EACH YEAR!"
THE LANDS FLOURISHED, BUT THEN CAME THE GREAT DISASTER--AND THE SWORD THAT WAS BROKEN HAD ITS MODEL DISCONTINUED.
BUT NOW THE TIME HAS COME, WART, TO FIND WITHIN YOU THAT STRENGTH TO PULL THAT SELFNAME SWORD FROM THE STONE!
JOK! THERE IT IS!
STONE? I DON'T SEE ANY STONE!


AND IT IS MY SACRED DUTY TO MAKE YOU WORTHY TO PULL THE SWORD! WE WILL BEGIN BY --AH YES! CHANGING YOU INTO A BIRD!
CHANGING ME-- WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
FIRST, THE ARMS MUST BE CHANGED INTO WINGS--!
MY ARM! LET GO!
JUST FOLD IT UP RIGHT-- HERE--!
AAAAA!
THEN THE BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
THANKS A MILLION, ALLISDAU! THAT ROBOT WAS STRONG!
NEVER MIND THAT, JOK--THE SWORD! YOU HAVE TO TAKE THE SWORD!
>SQUEEE< >SQUEEE< MAKE A LOVELY FISH-- >SQUEEEEEEEE<
12

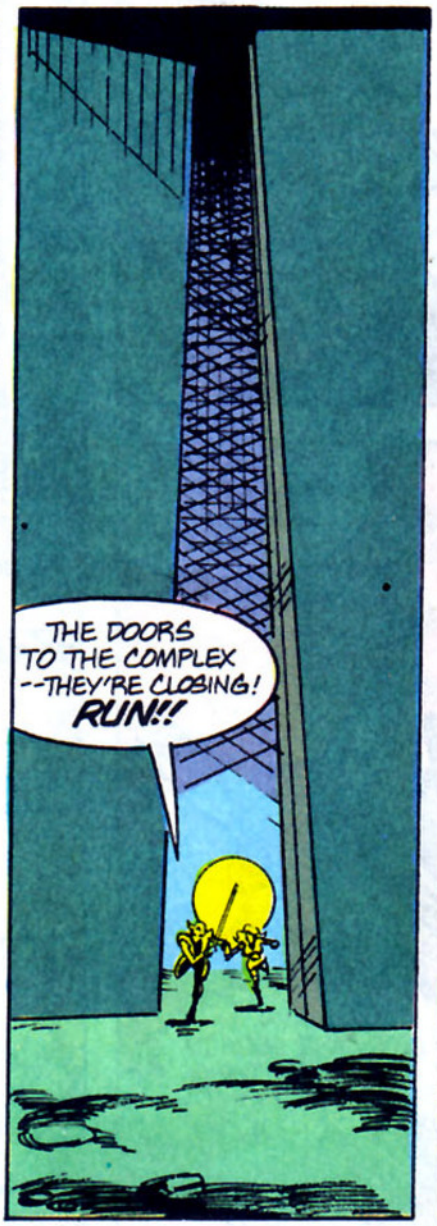
THE SWORD-- WELL, I GUESS I'D BEST TAKE IT--
--IF I'M WORTHY--!
STILL DON'T SEE ANY STONE --PROBABLY JUST HELD IN A SUS-PENSOR FIELD OR SOMETHING--
GUESS--GUESS I'LL JUST REACH OUT AND TAKE IT--!
YEEEEEEOW!!
13

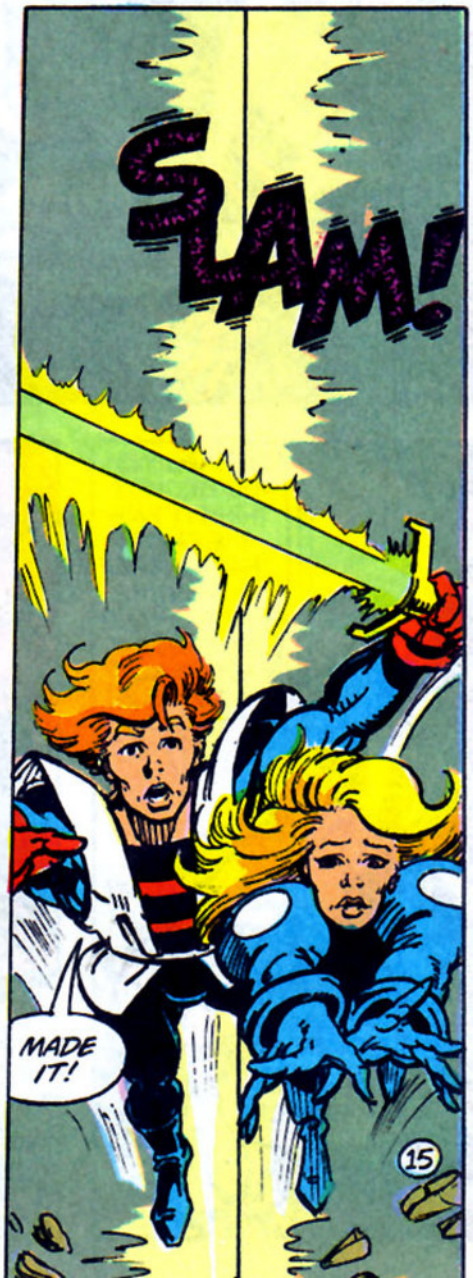
I'VE HAD IT! I'VE JUST BEEN BEATEN UP --SHOCKED--FOOLED WITH TOO MANY TIMES!
JOK, YOU CAN'T--
SHUT UP, ALLISDAU.
DO IT, COBBER SYDNEY OR THE BUSH! WHAT'S A LITTLE PAIN TO A BIG OAF LIKE YOU?
SHUT UP, HOAG--!
HELP ME! IS THERE NO ONE WHO WILL SAVE ME?
ALL RIGHT ALREADY! I'VE MADE MY DECISION! NOW SHUT UP!
WIN ONE FOR THE GIPPER, LAD!
SHUT UP, EVERYBODY-- SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT--
--UP!

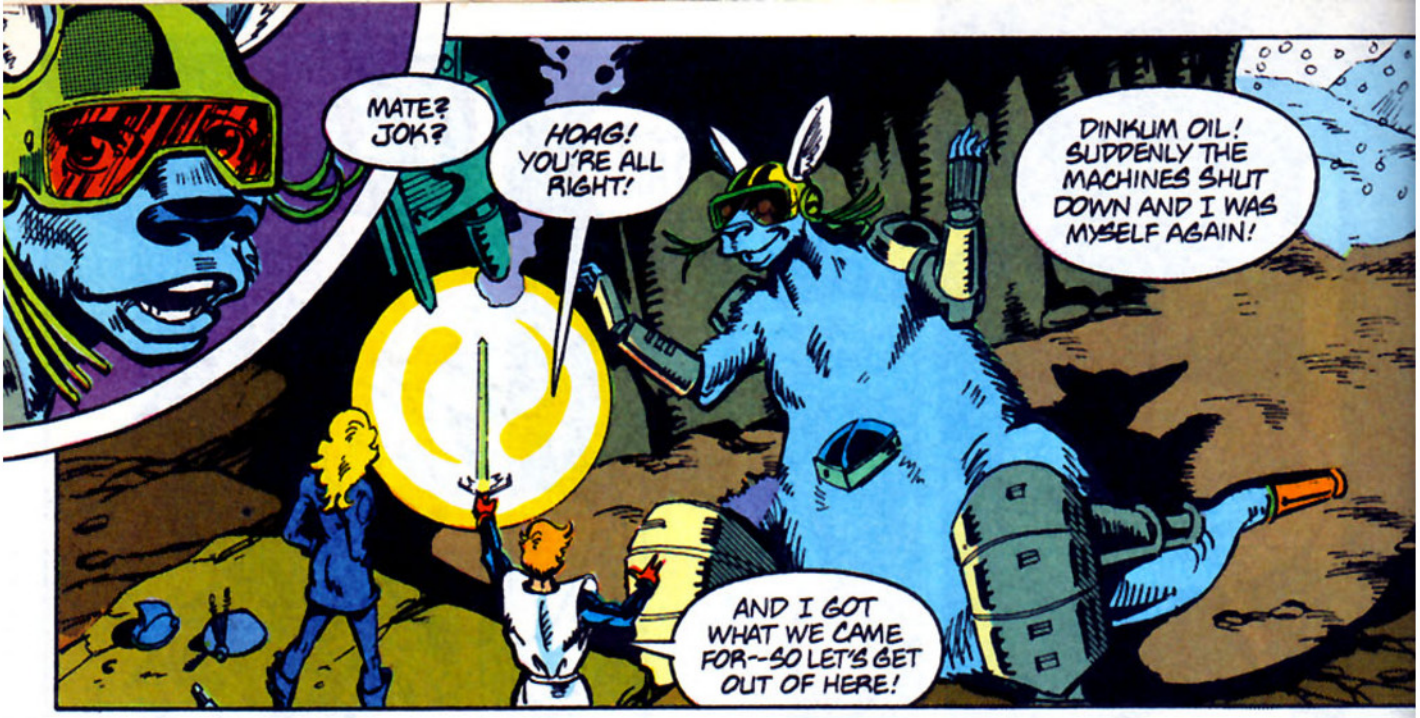

HUH? THE PAIN'S GONE--BUT ALL THE LIGHTS HAVE GONE OUT! EVERYTHING'S SHUTTING DOWN!

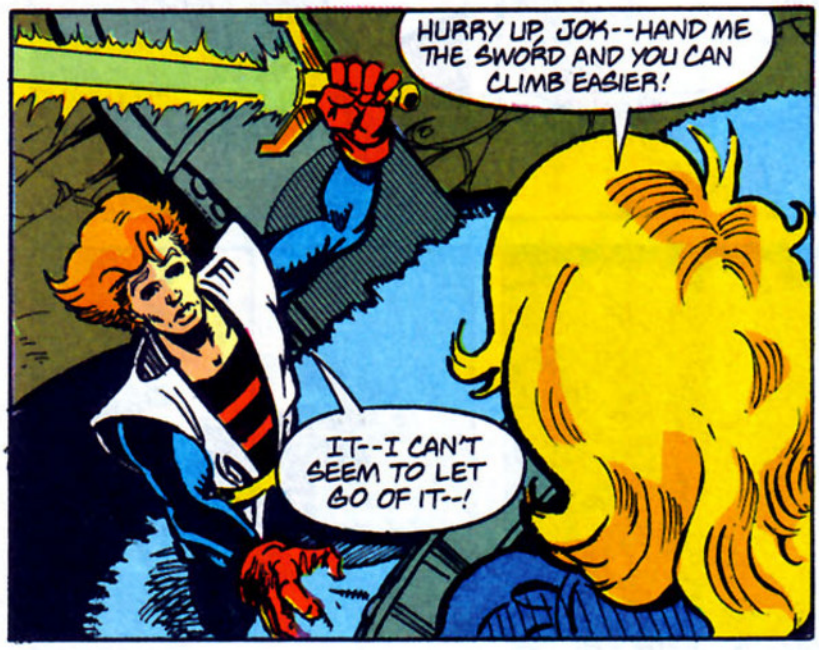

MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE THE COMPLEX'S FUNCTION IS FULFILLED, JOK.
MAKES SENSE--!

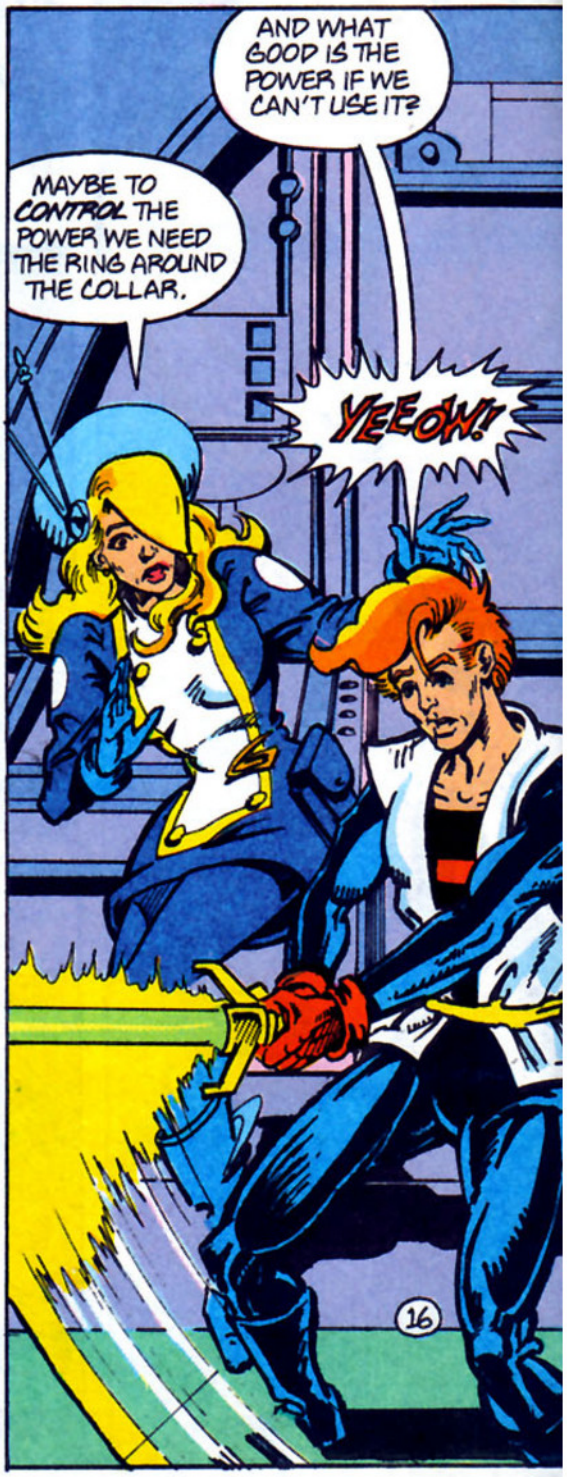
CREEEAK!
"CREEEAK?"

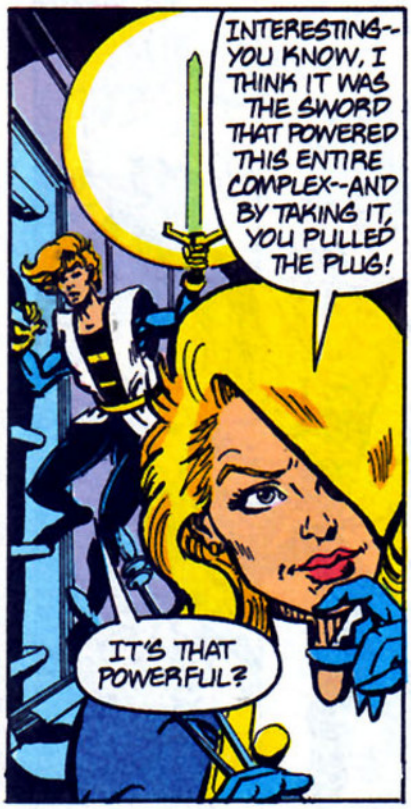

THE DOORS TO THE COMPLEX --THEY'RE CLOSING! RUN!!


SLAM!
MADE IT!

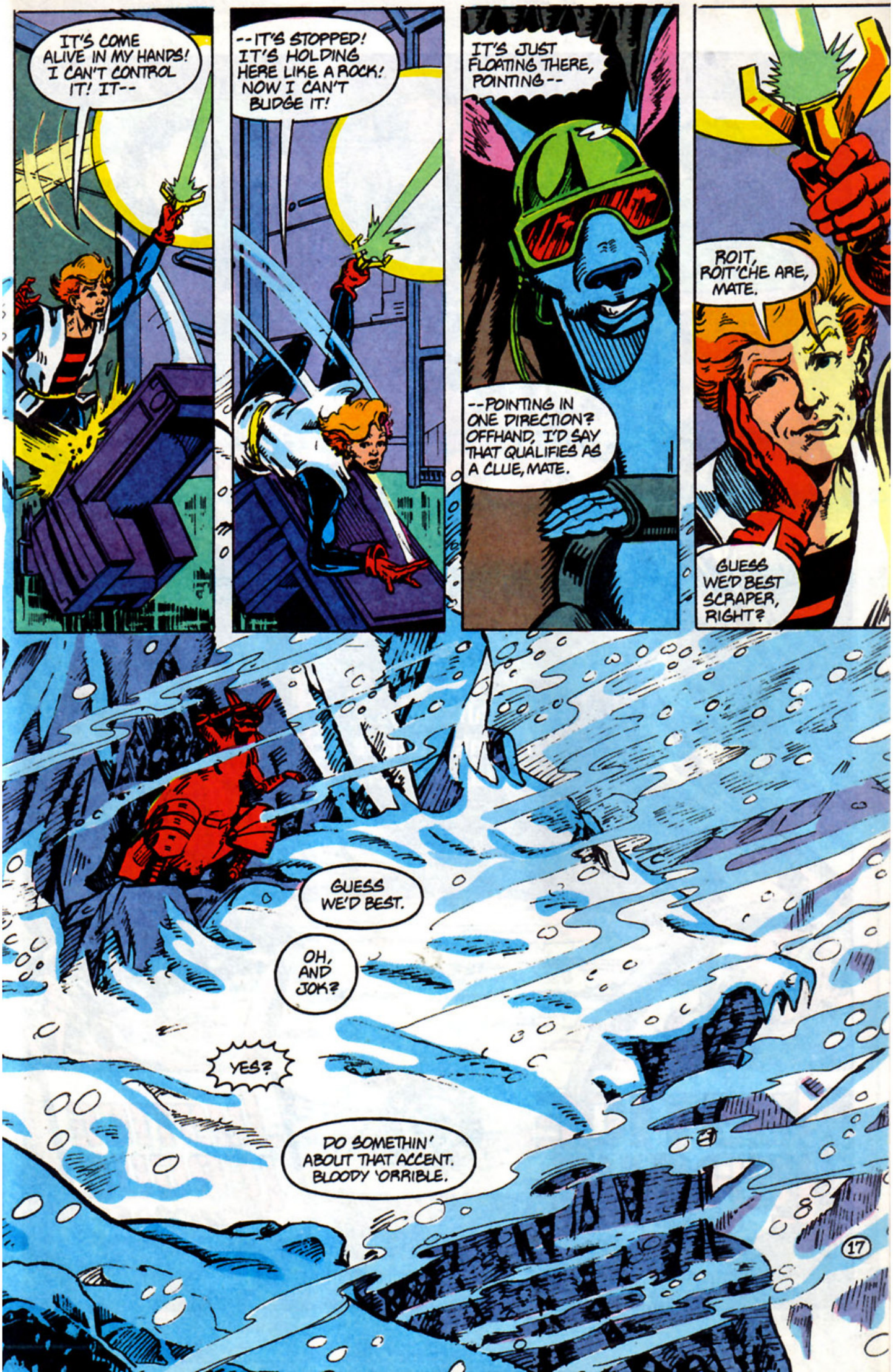

MATE? JOK?
HOAG! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
DINKUM OIL! SUDDENLY THE MACHINES SHUT DOWN AND I WAS MYSELF AGAIN!
AND I GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR--SO LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

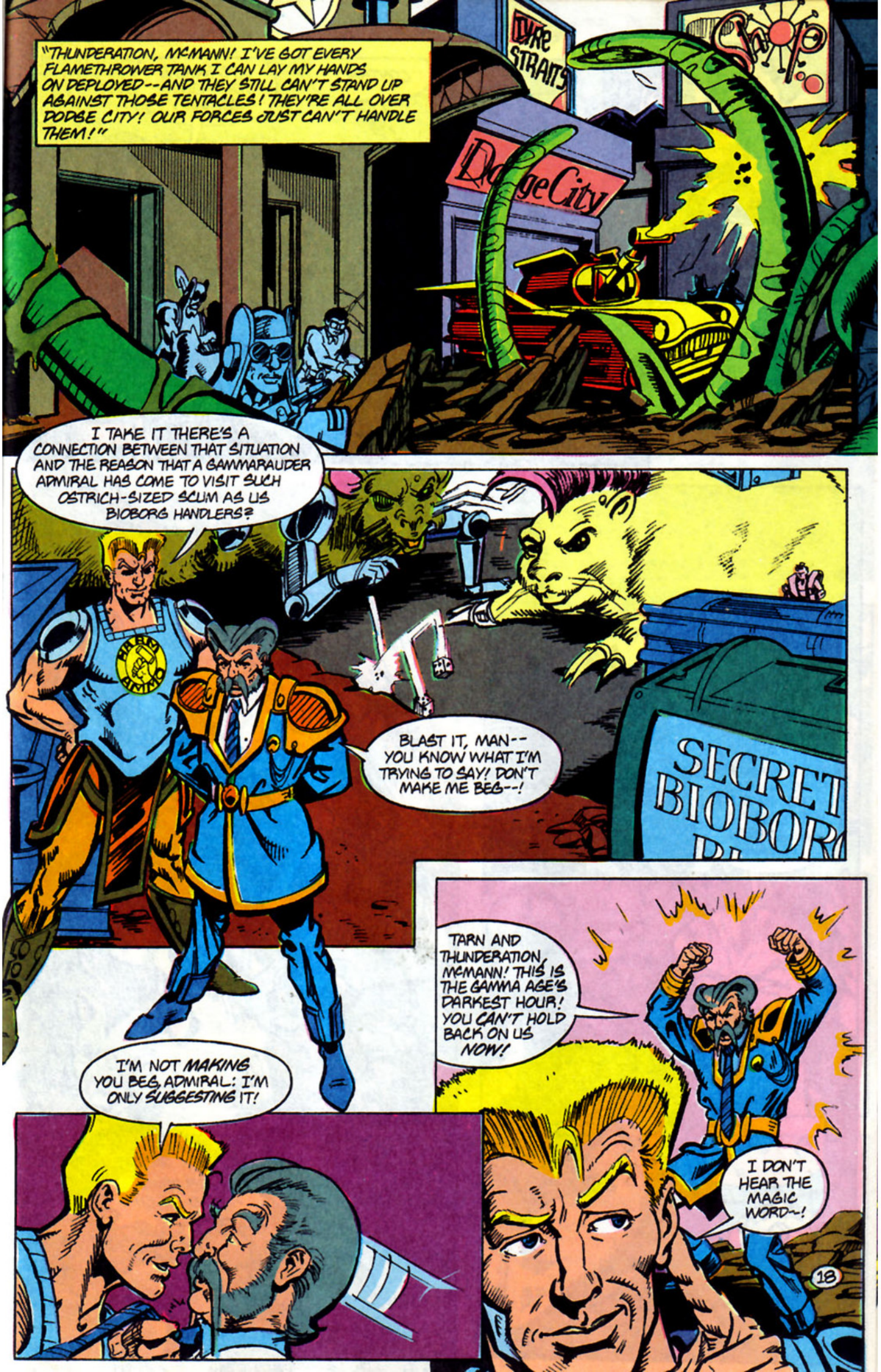

HURRY UP, JOK--HAND ME THE SWORD AND YOU CAN CLIMB EASIER!
IT--I CAN'T SEEM TO LET GO OF IT--!

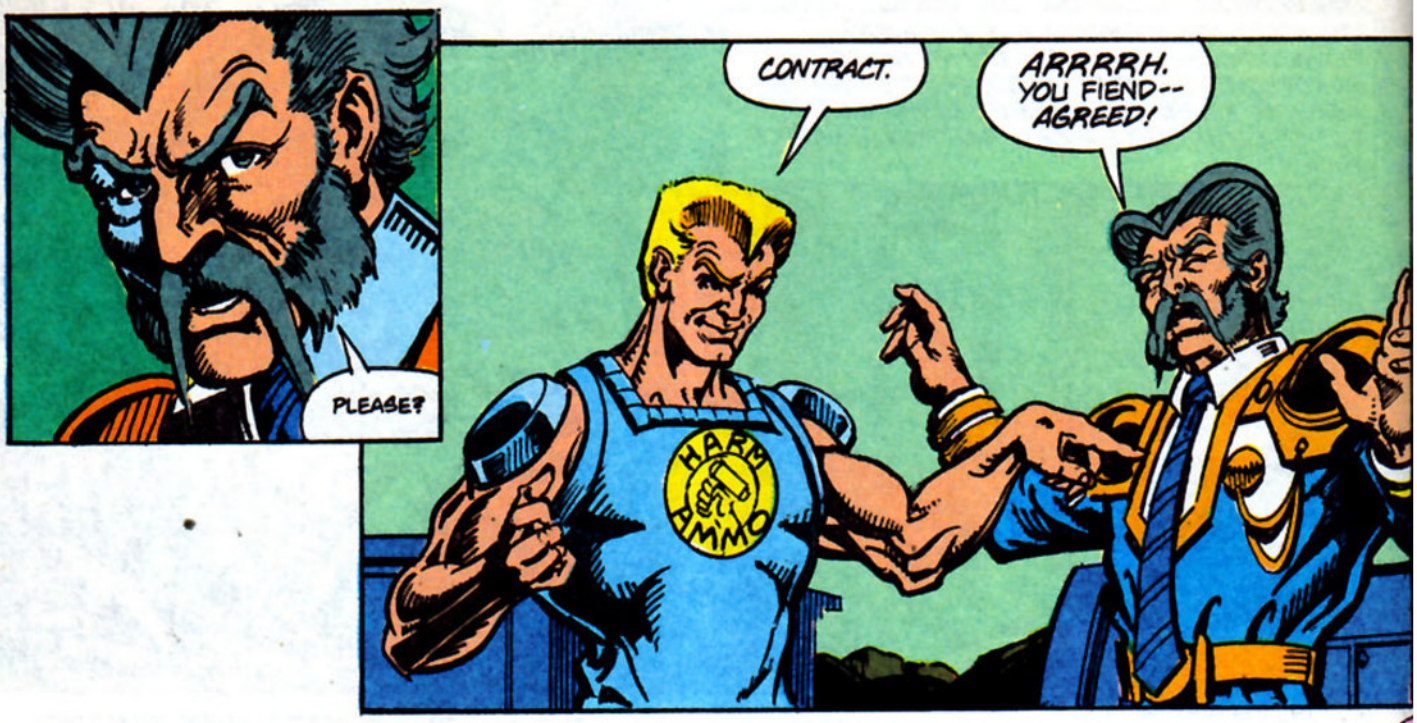

AND WHAT GOOD IS THE POWER IF WE CAN'T USE IT?
MAYBE TO CONTROL THE POWER WE NEED THE RING AROUND THE COLLAR.
YEEOW!
16


INTERESTING--YOU KNOW, I THINK IT WAS THE SWORD THAT POWERED THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX--AND BY TAKING IT, YOU PULLED THE PLUG!
IT'S THAT POWERFUL?

IN WHICH CASE PLEASE DON'T LET IT GO OFF INSIDE ME!
CALM DOWN, HOAG. I CAN'T SEEM TO GET IT TO DO ANYTHING EXCEPT GLOW--!

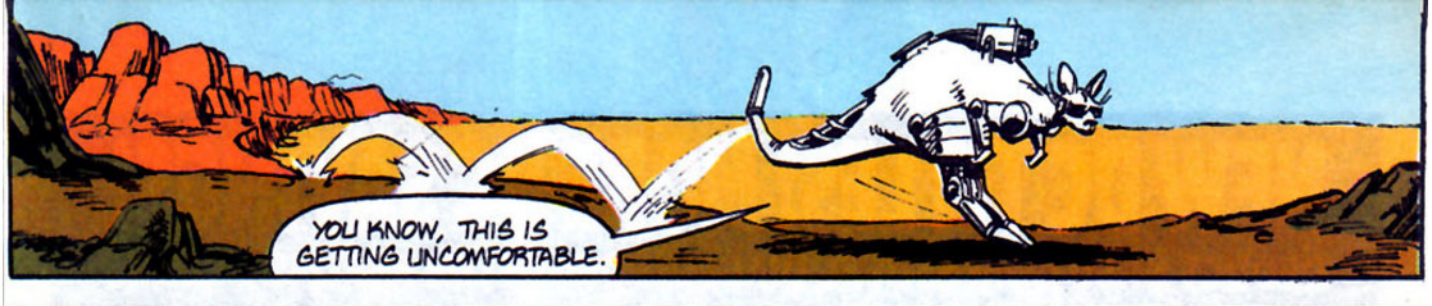

IT'S COME ALIVE IN MY HANDS! I CAN'T CONTROL IT! IT--
--IT'S STOPPED! IT'S HOLDING HERE LIKE A ROCK! NOW I CAN'T BUDGE IT!
IT'S JUST FLOATING THERE, POINTING--
--POINTING IN ONE DIRECTION? OFFHAND, I'D SAY THAT QUALIFIES AS A CLUE, MATE.
ROIT, ROIT'CHE ARE, MATE.
GUESS WE'D BEST SCRAPER, RIGHT?
GUESS WE'D BEST.
OH, AND JOK?
YES?
DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT THAT ACCENT. BLOODY 'ORRIBLE.

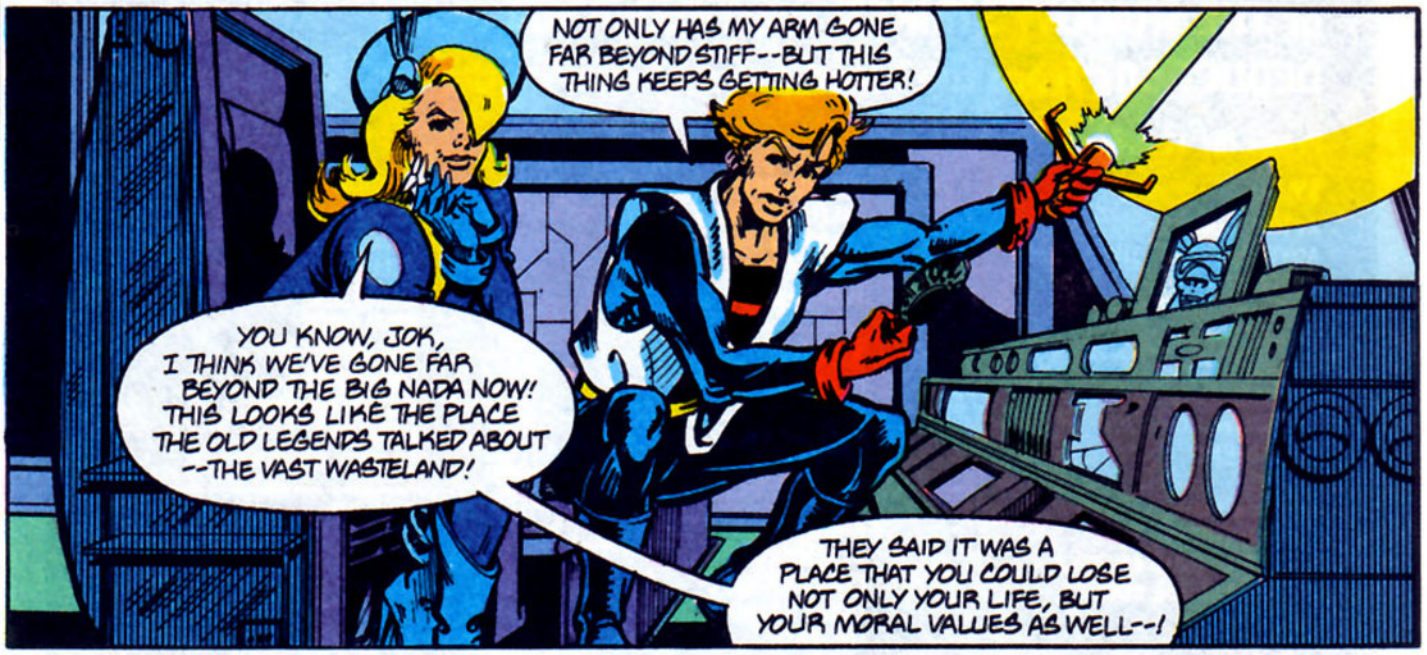

"THUNDERATION, MCMANN! I'VE GOT EVERY FLAMETHROWER TANK I CAN LAY MY HANDS ON DEPLOYED--AND THEY STILL CAN'T STAND UP AGAINST THOSE TENTACLES! THEY'RE ALL OVER DODGE CITY! OUR FORCES JUST CAN'T HANDLE THEM!"
DYRE STRAITS
Dodge City
I TAKE IT THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT SITUATION AND THE REASON THAT A GAMMARAUDER ADMIRAL HAS COME TO VISIT SUCH OSTRICH-SIZED SCUM AS US BIOBORG HANDLERS?
BLAST IT, MAN--YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY! DON'T MAKE ME BEG--!
SECRET BIOBORG
TARN AND THUNDERATION, MCMANN! THIS IS THE GAMMA AGE'S DARKEST HOUR! YOU CAN'T HOLD BACK ON US NOW!
I'M NOT MAKING YOU BEG, ADMIRAL: I'M ONLY SUGGESTING IT!
I DON'T HEAR THE MAGIC WORD--!


PLEASE?
CONTRACT.
ARRRRH. YOU FIEND-- AGREED!
HARM AMMO

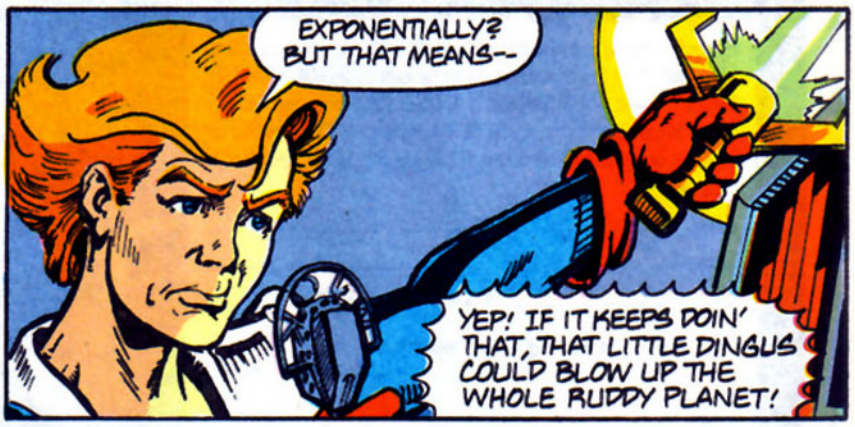
ALL RIGHT, YOU HANDLERS-- SADDLE UP AND MOVE 'EM OUT! WE'VE GOT A CIVILIZATION TO SAVE!
HARM AMMO

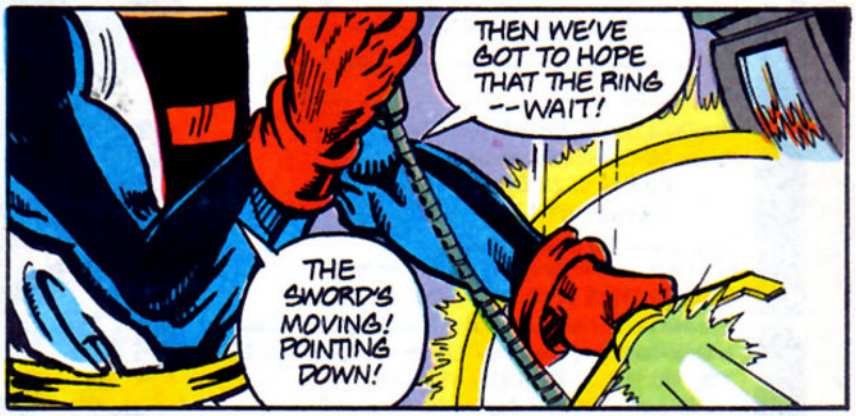
BIOBORGS --ARE--GO!


YOU KNOW, THIS IS GETTING UNCOMFORTABLE.

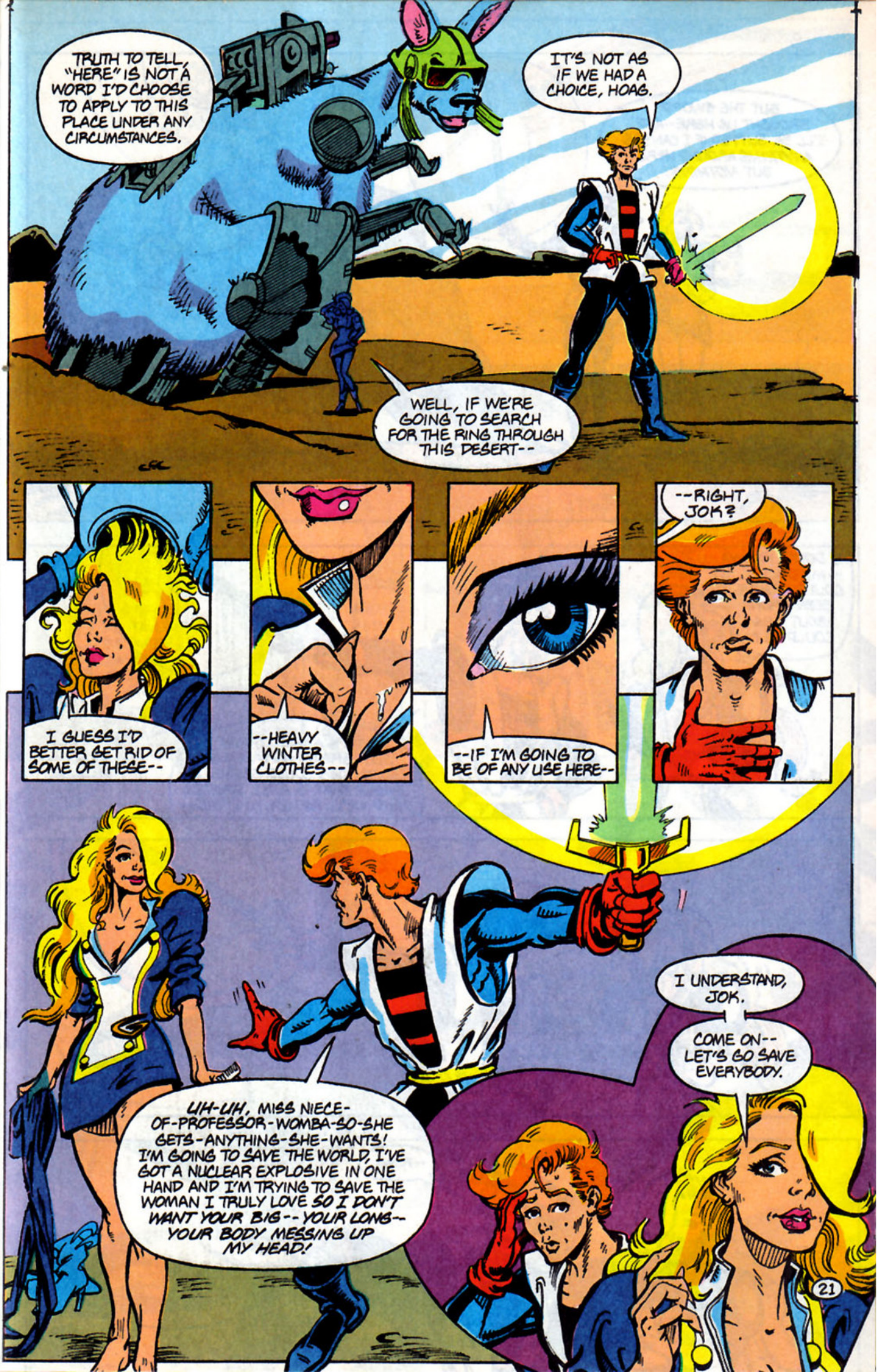

NOT ONLY HAS MY ARM GONE FAR BEYOND STIFF--BUT THIS THING KEEPS GETTING HOTTER!
YOU KNOW, JOK, I THINK WE'VE GONE FAR BEYOND THE BIG NADA NOW! THIS LOOKS LIKE THE PLACE THE OLD LEGENDS TALKED ABOUT --THE VAST WASTELAND!
THEY SAID IT WAS A PLACE THAT YOU COULD LOSE NOT ONLY YOUR LIFE, BUT YOUR MORAL VALUES AS WELL--!

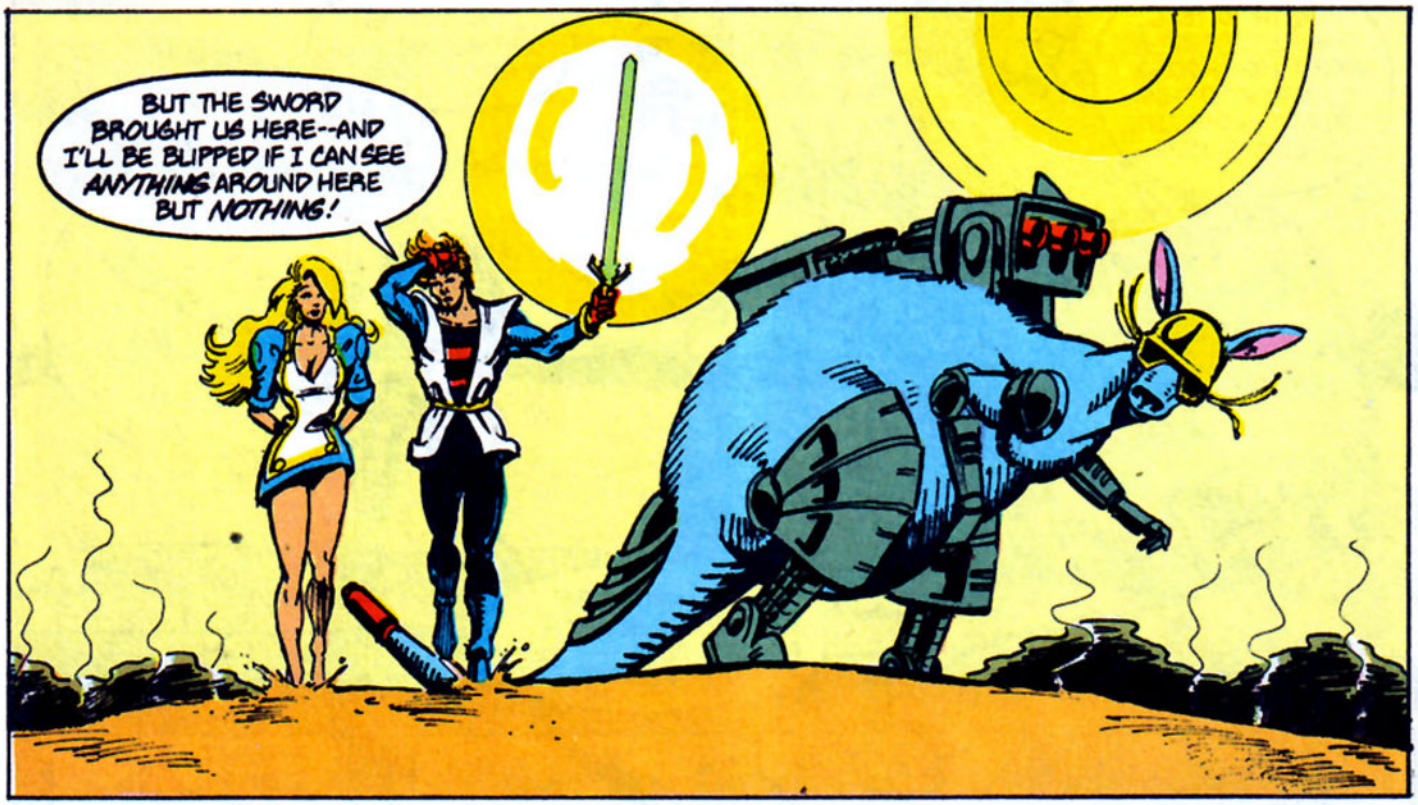
THAT'S HARDLY SOMETHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT, MISSY--
--AT LEAST NOT COMPARED TO THE FACT THAT BY MY SENSORS, THAT BLOODY SWORD O' JOK'S IS INCREASING IN ENERGY EXPONENTIALLY!

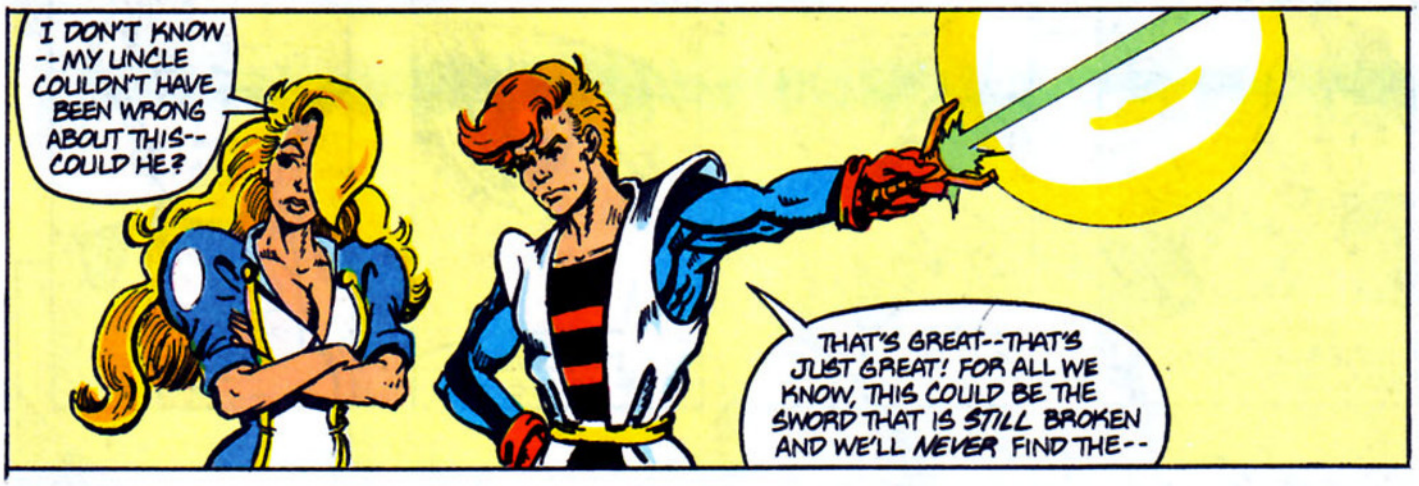

EXPONENTIALLY? BUT THAT MEANS--
YEP! IF IT KEEPS DOIN' THAT, THAT LITTLE DINGUS COULD BLOW UP THE WHOLE RUDDY PLANET!

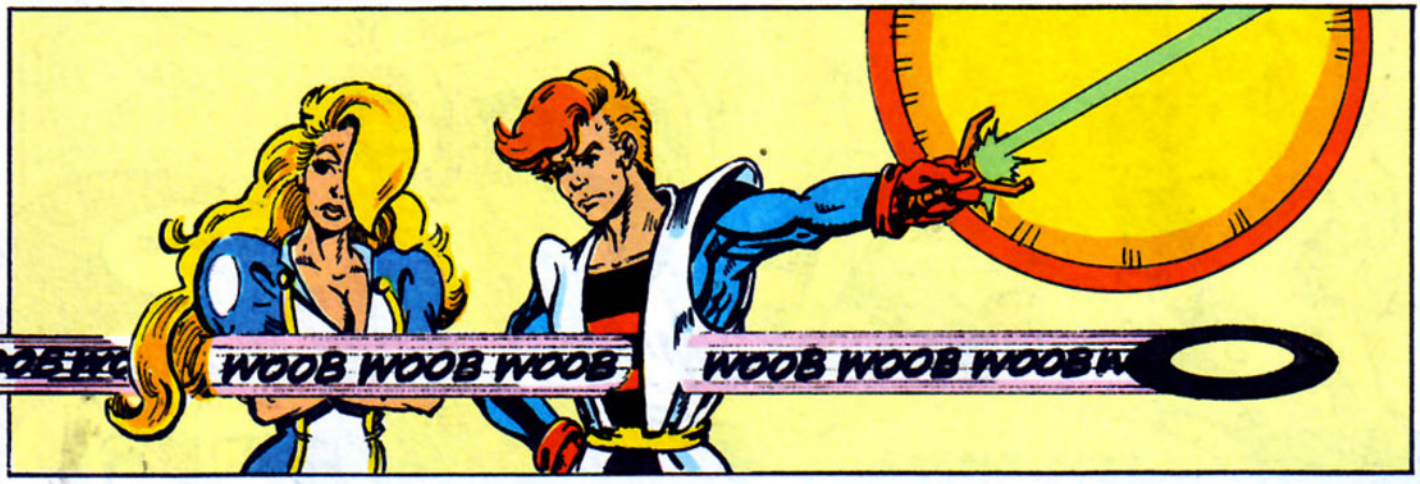

THEN WE'VE GOT TO HOPE THAT THE RING --WAIT!
THE SWORD'S MOVING! POINTING DOWN!

HOAG, STOP! WE'RE HERE!

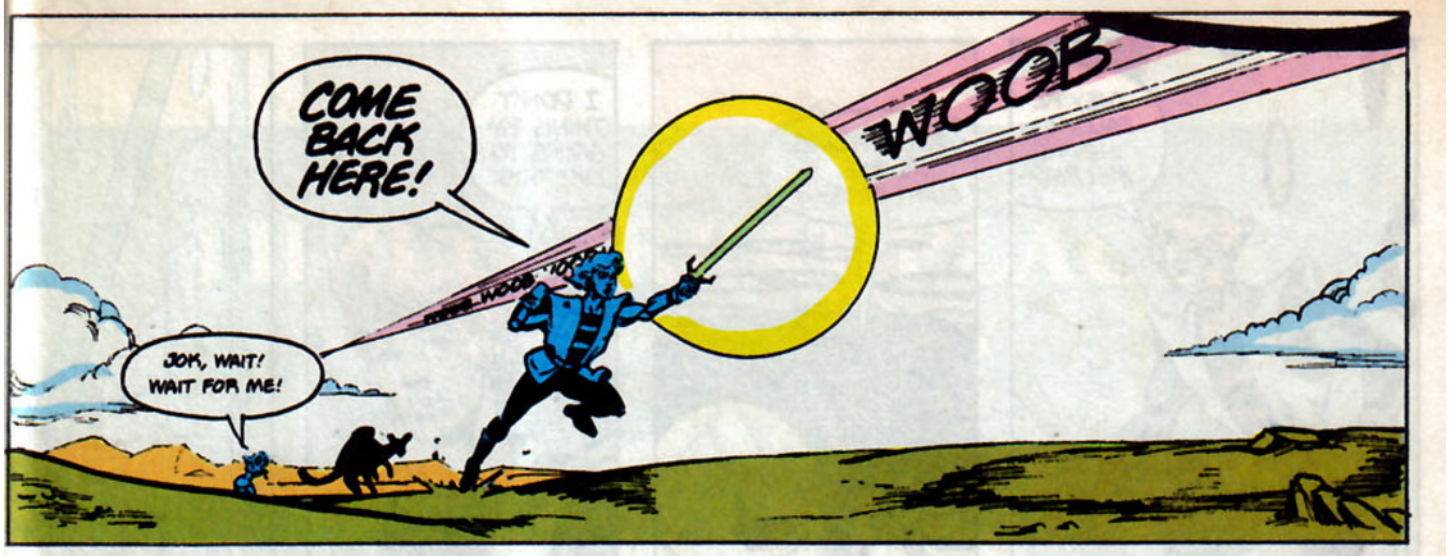

TRUTH TO TELL, "HERE" IS NOT A WORD I'D CHOOSE TO APPLY TO THIS PLACE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.
IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAD A CHOICE, HOAG.
WELL, IF WE'RE GOING TO SEARCH FOR THE RING THROUGH THIS DESERT--
I GUESS I'D BETTER GET RID OF SOME OF THESE--
--HEAVY WINTER CLOTHES--
--IF I'M GOING TO BE OF ANY USE HERE--
--RIGHT, JOK?
UH-UH, MISS NIECE-OF-PROFESSOR-WOMBA-SO-SHE GETS-ANYTHING-SHE-WANTS! I'M GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD, I'VE GOT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE IN ONE HAND AND I'M TRYING TO SAVE THE WOMAN I TRULY LOVE SO I DON'T WANT YOUR BIG-- YOUR LONG-- YOUR BODY MESSING UP MY HEAD!
I UNDERSTAND, JOK.
COME ON-- LET'S GO SAVE EVERYBODY.


BUT THE SWORD BROUGHT US HERE--AND I'LL BE BLIPPED IF I CAN SEE ANYTHING AROUND HERE BUT NOTHING!

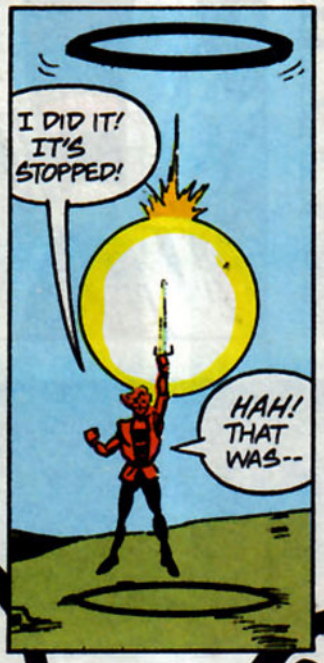

I DON'T KNOW --MY UNCLE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WRONG ABOUT THIS--COULD HE?
THAT'S GREAT--THAT'S JUST GREAT! FOR ALL WE KNOW, THIS COULD BE THE SWORD THAT IS STILL BROKEN AND WE'LL NEVER FIND THE--

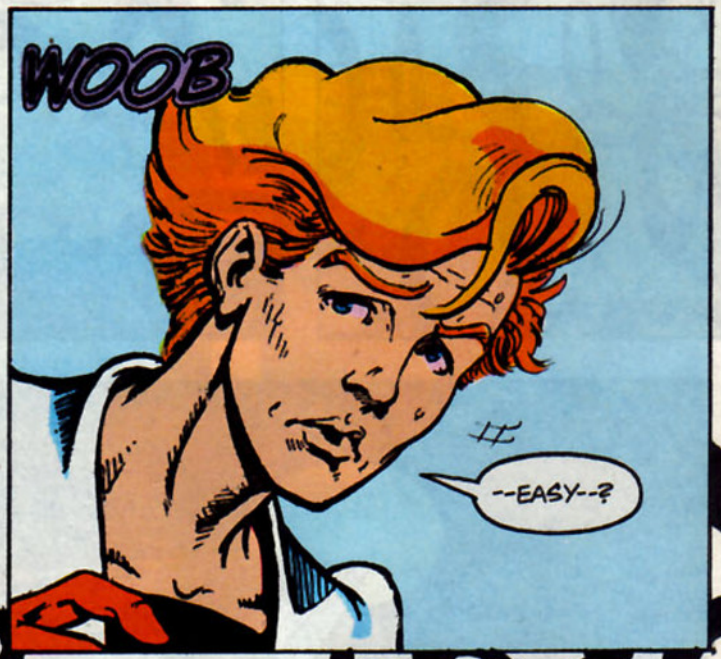

WOOB WOOB WOOB
WOOB WOOB WOOB

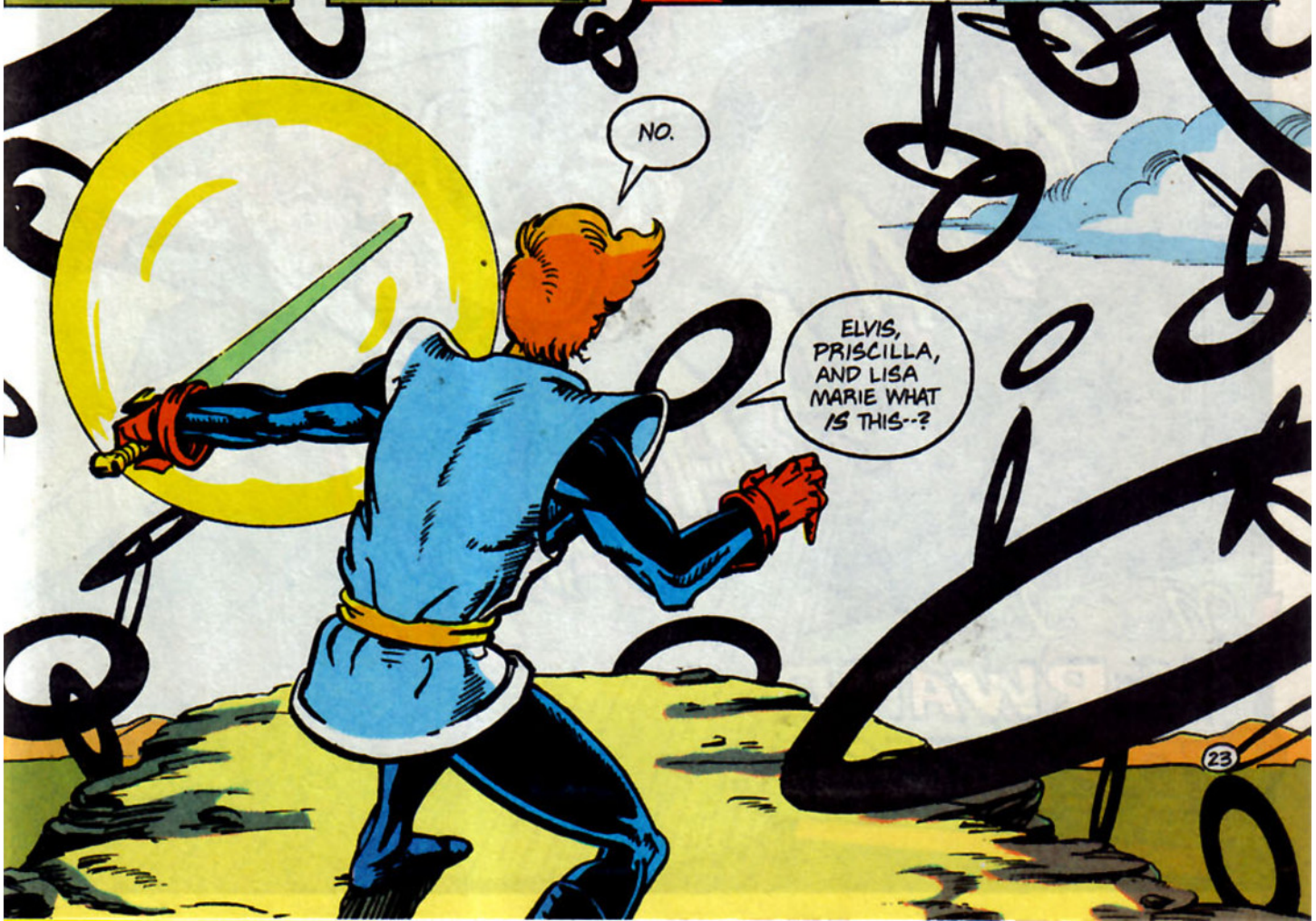
--RING.

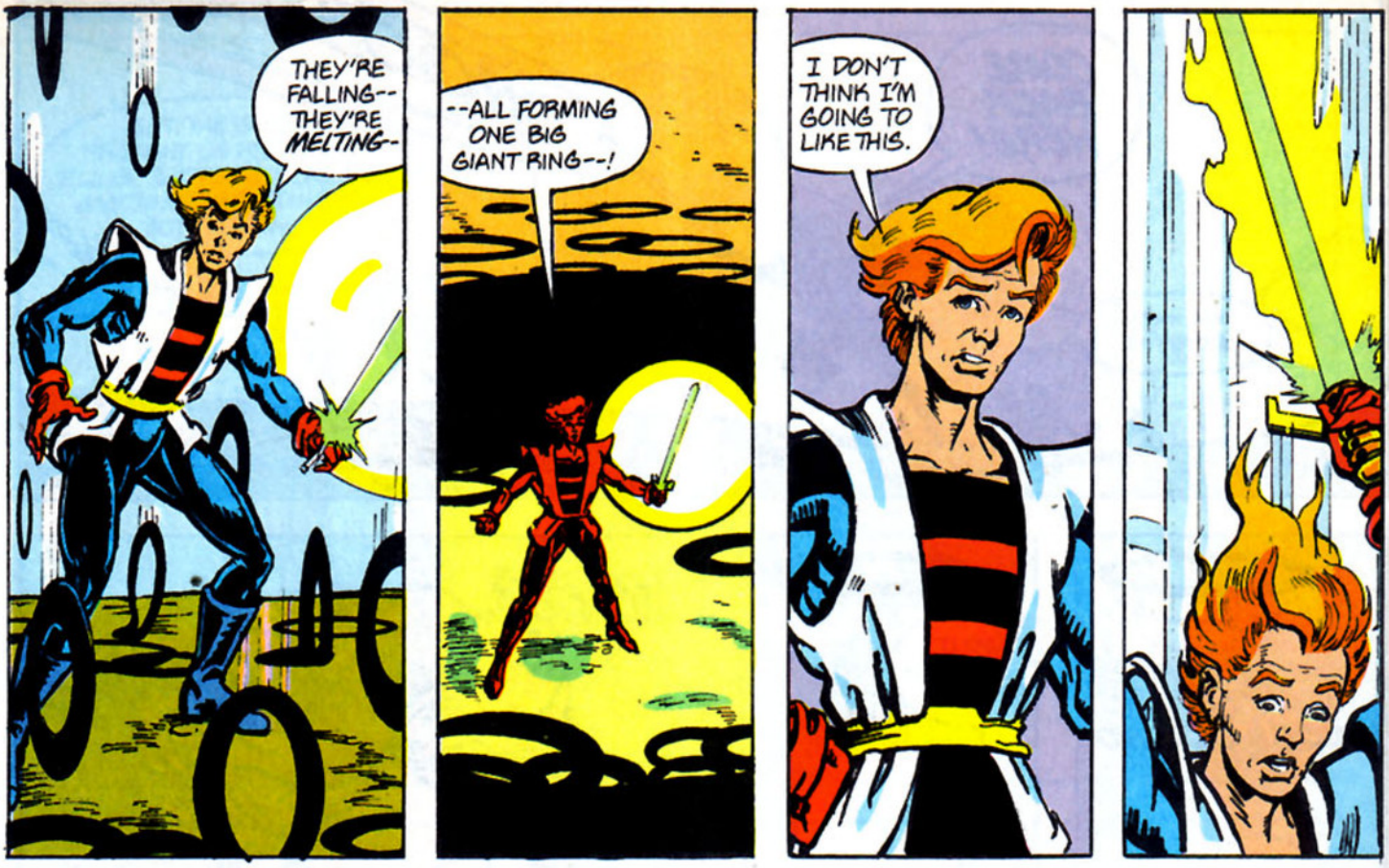

COME BACK HERE!
WOOB
JOK, WAIT! WAIT FOR ME!

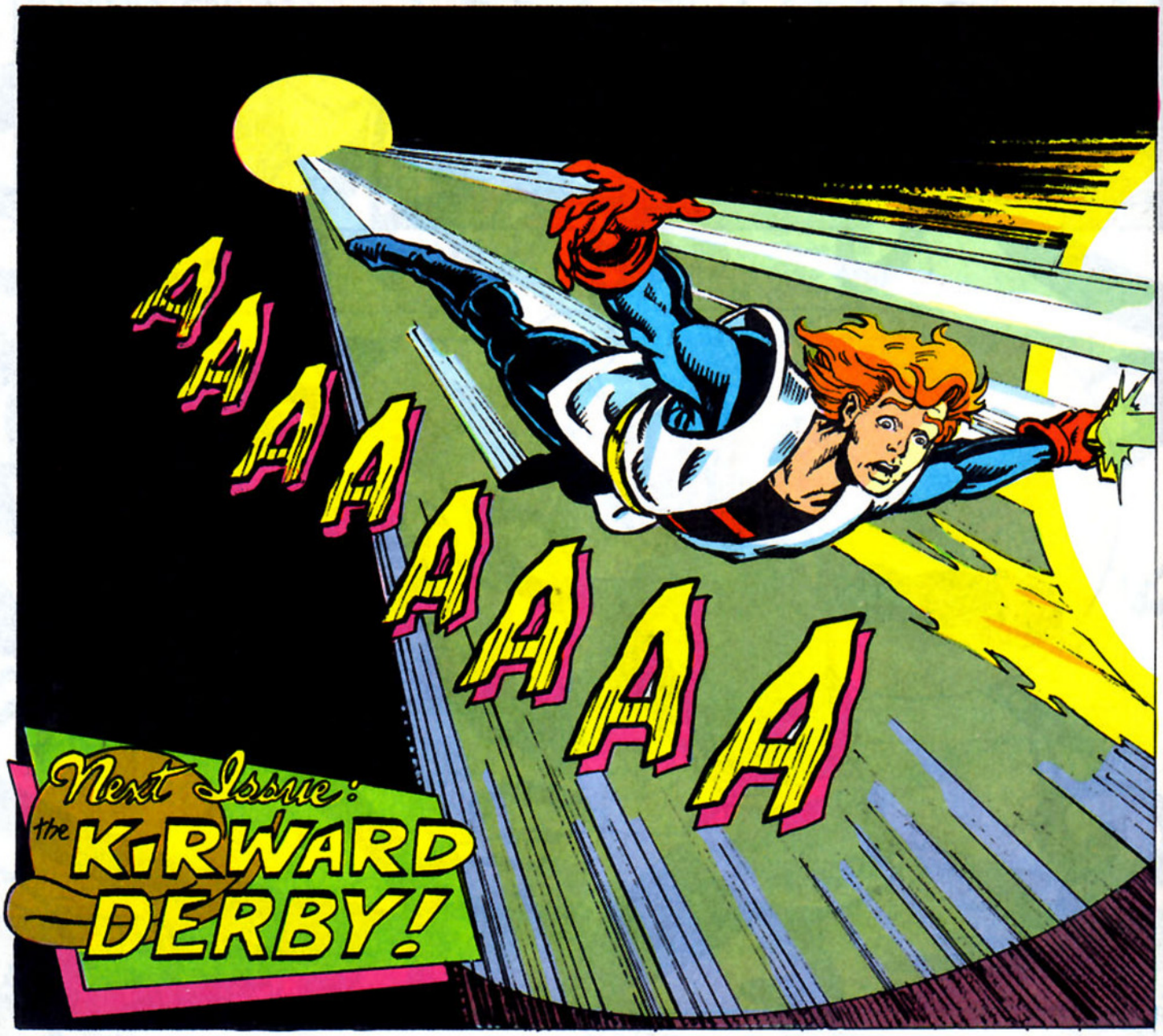
WOOB WOOB WOO
STOP! BY THE POWER OF THE SWORD I COMMAND-- OH, FUDD-- STOP!


I DID IT! IT'S STOPPED!
HAH! THAT WAS--


WOOB
--EASY--?


NO.
ELVIS, PRISCILLA, AND LISA MARIE WHAT IS THIS--?


THEY'RE FALLING-- THEY'RE MELTING--
--ALL FORMING ONE BIG GIANT RING--!
I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE THIS.


AAAAAA
Next Issue: the KIRWARD DERBY!

A
VIGILANTE
Scan
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